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THE
HISTORY
OF
WESLEYAN METHODISM.

BY
GEORGE H. HARWOOD,

WESLEYAN LOCAL PREACHER.

"Methodism, so-called, is the old religion, the religion of the Bible, the religion of the Primitive Church, the religion of the Church of England."—JOHN WESLEY.

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P R E F A C E .

WESLEYAN METHODISM has had several able historians, and, it may be safely affirmed, there is no important fact connected with its rise and progress, excepting such as are of recent date, which they have not fairly recorded, and fully explained.

The present little work is not therefore, introduced on public notice, to "supply their lack of service toward" a cause which is dear to the writer; but simply as the result of his conviction, that a History, characterised by conciseness of statement, variety of incident, and adapted to the masses of "*the people* called Methodists," was, at least, desirable.

Having been long of this opinion, he took the liberty of writing a letter on the subject in February, 1850, to the Rev. Thomas Jackson, the President of the Wesleyan Conference, suggesting that he should, himself, undertake the authorship of such a work. The following answer, which, with characteristic kindness and courtesy Mr. Jackson immediately returned, tended to confirm him in his views:—he began to collect materials for it himself, and

now sends forth the present volume to the Methodist people as the result, with the prayer that God may give His blessing with its perusal.

“Richmond, February 7th, 1850.

“My dear Sir,

“I fully agree with you that a work of the kind you mention, and which you have so ably sketched, is every way desirable, and could not fail to be extensively useful, but whether I shall ever have sufficient leisure to execute such a task is at present very uncertain. I will mention the matter to other parties, and it is possible that something practical may arise from your suggestions which I cannot but consider equally seasonable and kind.

“I am,

“My dear Sir,

“Yours very respectfully,

“THOMAS JACKSON.”

THE HISTORY OF WESLEYAN METHODISM.

CHAPTER I.—*The Wesley Family.*

THE first person of the Wesley family of whom we can obtain any definite information is Bartholomew Wesley, the great grandfather of the Founder of Methodism. He was born about the beginning of the 17th century, and appears to have been educated purposely for the Christian ministry. He was sent to one of our Universities, most probably to the University of Oxford. Here he not only applied himself to the study of divinity, but likewise to that of physic. How long he continued at the University is unknown ; but in the year 1650, he is mentioned as one of the Rectors of Catherston, in Dorsetshire. The Act of Uniformity, which took effect on August 24, 1662, and deprived more than two thousand clergymen of their livings, deprived Bartholomew Wesley of his living among the rest. There were at that time a considerable number of the clergy who conscientiously objected to some portions of

the Book of Common Prayer, and had never received episcopal ordination; the intention therefore of the High Church party in procuring the Act of Uniformity, was to restore *uniformity*, with regard to formularies, throughout the National Church. The result was, that the most holy, conscientious, and laborious clergymen to be found in the country were ejected from their livings. Mr. Wesley's name appeared somewhat ominous, for he was deprived of his ministerial *status* on *St. Bartholomew's* day;—the festival of the saint after whom he was named. Being thus suspended from the exercise of his sacred functions, and without the usual means of sustenance, he (as did many others of the noble-minded men who had suffered through the cruelty of that Act supported himself by practising physic. He was in a great measure, qualified for the proper discharge of the important duties of this profession, having devoted himself to the study of medicine while at the University, but being frequently consulted as a physician during the prosecution of his ministerial duties in his parish. He seems to have been the type of some of his descendants. Dr. Calamy informing us that he was remarkable for "peculiar plainness of speech." It is supposed that the good man did not long survive his ejection from his living; for being much affected by the premature decease of his son John, who was likewise a minister, he rapidly descended into the tomb. He died in the year 1671 or 1672.

John, the grandfather of the Founder of Methodism, was the son of the aforementioned Bartholomew Wesley. He was born about the year 1636, and was brought up by his pious father in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." He was, from his infancy, the subject of a powerful religious influence, and regularly kept a diary, wherein he recorded the dealings of God with his soul. As his father intended him for the christian ministry, he was sent to Oxford to receive a suitable education. Here he was noticed, both for the diligence of his studies, and the seriousness of his deportment. He obtained the degree of Master of Arts. The oriental languages engaged his especial attention, in which he is said to have made great proficiency in them. In May, 1658, he was appointed to the vicarage of Whitchurch, in Dorsetshire, with an income of about £30 a year. His ministrations however, were but of short duration ; and even during the brief period in which he was engaged in ministerial duties, he was much harrassed and perplexed. Like his venerable father, he conscientiously objected to the use of some portions of the Prayer Book, and was therefore subjected to much annoyance. Dr. Gilbert Ironside, Bishop of Bristol, being informed of the conduct of Mr. Wesley, desired to have some conversation with him. He consequently waited upon the Bishop at his earliest opportunity, and an interesting conversation ensued, the substance of which is still preserved. It shows him to have been a man of independent spirit, sterling sense, and

unaffected piety. The Bishop appeared satisfied with his explanations, and they parted in a very friendly manner. It was not long after this conversation had taken place that Mr. Wesley was seized as he was coming out of his church, and carried to Blandford prison. He was, however, liberated after a short confinement, but was bound over to appear and take his trial at the next assizes. He appeared accordingly, and after having had an altercation with the judge concerning his refusal to read the Prayer Book, &c., his case was adjourned until the assizes following. He returned joyfully home, and regularly preached to his people on the sabbath-day. At length the Act of Uniformity came into operation August 24, 1662; and, being strictly conscientious, he was, by it, entirely precluded from legally officiating as a christian minister. Thus we see, that both this excellent man and his father, fell victims to the injustice of that notorious enactment.

After his ejectment from his living he removed to Melcomb; then to Bridgewater, Ilminster, and Taunton. A gentleman afterwards offered him a house at Preston, which generous offer he accepted, and lived there the remainder of his life. He was determined to preach the gospel whatever might be the consequences, and was on that account subjected to much personal inconvenience and injury. He regularly met some serious people at Poole; and, indeed, preached wherever he could get a congregation, for no opposition could damp the ardour of his zeal. He was frequently

disturbed, repeatedly apprehended, and four times imprisoned; in Poole, for half-a-year; in Dorchester, for quarter of a year; and elsewhere, for shorter periods. But he braved all the dangers which surrounded him, with true christian heroism, and God greatly blessed and wonderfully preserved him. He married a lady of very respectable connections; the issue of which was a numerous family, but the names of only two of the children,—Matthew and Samuel, have come down to us. Having served God with all his powers, and held fast his profession of faith unwavering amid a crooked and perverse generation, this holy man “was taken” as Dr. Calamy observes “out of this vale of tears to that world where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest, when he had not been much longer an inhabitant here below than his blessed Master was; whom he served with his whole heart according to the best light he had.” He died about the year 1670.

Matthew, the eldest son of John Wesley, following the example of his grandfather Bartholomew, studied physic; and, after having travelled over the greatest part of Europe for improvement, settled in London. He was eminently useful, and is said to have made a handsome fortune by his profession. He died in 1737, when about 77 years of age. After his death some beautiful verses were published in the Christian Magazine which represent him as a polite, intelligent, and benevolent man. And in the Gentleman's Magazine for June, 1737, there are also some ex-

cellent lines in his praise, entitled, "Verses on the death of Mr. Matthew Wesley." Indeed, from what we can gather from the scanty memoirs which are preserved, he appears to have been both a scholar and a gentleman.

Samuel Wesley, the brother of Matthew, and father of the Founder of Methodism, was born at Whitchurch in Dorsetshire. He received a superior education, and was intended as a minister among the Nonconformists. When very young, such was the estimate formed of his learning and abilities, that the Dissenters chose him to draw up a reply to some severe invectives which had been written against them. But, in the course of his reading, he saw reason to believe the Dissenters were wrong, and, instead of writing the expected reply, he actually formed a determination to join the Established Church. Shortly afterwards, without consulting any of his relations, he went to Oxford, and entered himself at Exeter College. Having continued there for some time, he went up to London, and was ordained Deacon. He immediately obtained a curacy of £28 per annum, which he held for one year. He was then appointed chaplain aboard the fleet, and at the expiration of a year, obtained another curacy. In 1693 the living of South Ormsby, in Lincolnshire, was presented to him: and soon afterwards Queen Mary gave him the living of Epworth in the same county. He resigned the former; and, in 1723, entered upon the living of Wroote.

Being a man of considerable learning and unconquerable perseverance, his literary productions were numerous. His first attempt was a volume of poems which he published while at Oxford under the curious title of "Maggots." Not long after, he assisted some others in carrying on a periodical which created much excitement in those times, entitled, "The Athenian Gazette," *alias* "The Athenian Mercury." Mr. Dunton, the celebrated and witty printer, who was his brother-in-law, originated, and also assisted in the support of this singular literary production. In 1693 he published a poetical life of Christ; a work of considerable merit. His own account of it is very modest. "The cuts," says he, "are good; the notes pretty good; the verses so, so." To this work he owed the living of Epworth, for having dedicated it to Queen Mary, the consort of William the Third, he was presented with that living as an expression of Her Majesty's esteem for his learning. Two years afterwards, he published *Elegies on Queen Mary and Archbishop Tillotson*; and, in 1698, a sermon preached before the Society for the Reformation of Manners. In 1704 he published "The Old and New Testament attempted in verse;" an excellent and useful work particularly for the young. In the following year he wrote a long poem of great merit, entitled, "Marlborough, or the Fate of Europe." This fine poem procured him a chaplainship in the army. One other piece on account of its superior excellence deserves particular attention; it is called "Eupolis, his Hymn to the Creator." A

great man says of this poem, "I believe it to be, without exception, the finest in the English language."

His various works make it abundantly manifest that his talents were far from being of an ordinary character. He was, emphatically, a *literary* man, and enjoyed the friendship of some of the leading men of the day. Thus a biographer has observed, that "Mr. Wesley was highly esteemed by Lord Oxford, Mr. Pope, and Dean Swift; and indeed by some of the greatest men of the time." Mr. Pope, in particular, when writing to Dean Swift calls Mr. Wesley a "good," an "honest," and a "learned" man.

He gave a good deal of attention to political affairs, but religion was the great subject to which he chiefly devoted his time and abilities. Being a high churchman he could not but anxiously watch the progress of events in those peculiar times, and was induced to occasionally employ his pen upon political topics; yet, it may be observed, that whatever he wrote had a tendency to extend sound principles, and promote the interests of genuine religion. Thus it has been said with regard to him,

"Whate'er his strains, still glorious was his end,
"Faith to assert, and *virtue* to defend."

One circumstance concerning him of a semi-political and semi-religious character, deserves especial notice. Dr. Henry Sacheverel, a clergyman, in 1709, preached and published two violent sermons in defence of high church principles.

These sermons were brought before the House of Commons by Mr. Dolben, the son of the Archbishop of York, and were voted scandalous and seditious libels. The Commons likewise resolved to impeach Dr. Sacheverel at the bar of the House of Lords. He was consequently taken into custody, and a day appointed for his trial. The trial commenced on February 27th, 1710. "When the Commons had gone through their charge," says Dr. Goldsmith in his History of England, "the managers for Sacheverel undertook his defence with great art and eloquence. *He afterwards recited a speech himself, which, from the difference found between it and his sermons, seems evidently the work of another.* In this he solemnly justified his intentions to the Queen and her Government. He spoke in the most respectful terms of the Revolution and the Protestant succession. He maintained the doctrine of non-resistance as a tenet of the church in which he was brought up; and in a pathetic conclusion endeavoured to excite the pity of his audience." This famous speech which Dr. Goldsmith says that Dr. Sacheverel "recited," and which he also says "seems evidently the work of another;" was composed by no other than Samuel Wesley, the Rector of Epworth, as his son John informs us in his History of England.

Mr. Samuel Wesley was a zealous and faithful preacher. He held the living of Epworth upwards of forty years, and was "distinguished for the zeal and fidelity with which he discharged his parish duties." One remarkable fact is, that in his en-

tire parish there was not either a Papist or Dissenter. This circumstance is alluded to by his son Samuel, in a poem entitled "The Parish Priest ;"

"No Romish wolf around his fences prowld,
Nor fox Dissenter earth'd within his fold."

He married Susannah, the youngest daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley. Dr. Annesley was a truly pious, learned, and well-known Nonconformist. He was a remarkable man, and had a remarkable family. His children were *twenty-five* in number. Dr. Menton when he had baptised one of them, was asked, how many children Dr. Annesley had? He answered, that he "believed it was two dozen, or a quarter of a hundred." "The reckoning children by *dozens*," says Dr. Clarke, "is a singular circumstance; an honour to which few persons ever arrive." Mr. Samuel Wesley, (as before observed,) married the *youngest* daughter in this somewhat numerous family; and she was, unquestionably, one of the most handsome, devout, upright, and intelligent women in the kingdom. They lived together for more than forty years, and God blessed them with no less than *nineteen* children.

Mr. Wesley grew venerable with age; but the ardour of his soul was not extinguished, nor his spirit of perseverance, crushed. He commenced a latin work entitled "Dissertations upon the Book of Job," and carried on this valuable and elaborate production with the most active and unwearied diligence. As might have been expected,

the close study and incessant labour which he bestowed upon it, greatly increased the infirmities of his age; and, at length, this sincere and holy christian,—this useful minister,—this great and learned man,—sunk under his burden and died. He departed this life on April 25th, 1735, in the 72nd year of his age.

Although Mr. Samuel Wesley and Susannah his wife, had such a numerous family as *nineteen* children, yet records of only *ten* are saved from oblivion.

Samuel was undoubtedly the eldest. He was born in the year 1690. When 14 years of age he was sent to Westminster school, which had, under the able management of Dr. Busby, “acquired the highest celebrity of any school in Europe.” In 1711 he was elected to Christ Church, Oxford; where he was considered a superior classical scholar. After he had taken his degree of Master of Arts, he was called to officiate as usher in Westminster school. Shortly afterwards he took orders under the patronage of Dr. Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, and Dean of Westminster. His ardent and unwavering attachment to this unfortunate prelate, under all his reverses of fortune, unhappily affected his interests in the National Church, throwing almost insuperable difficulties in the way of his promotion. In 1732 the head-mastership of the Free school at Tiverton, in Devonshire, became vacant, and he was invited to take the situation. He accepted the invitation, and kept the office till death. He died on November 6th, 1739, in the 49th year of his age. He

was, like his venerable father, a high churchman ; but too enlightened to be intolerant. He had, naturally, a strong understanding, which he most carefully cultivated. His poetical powers were of a very high order, and sometimes feathers were taken from the wings of his muse to assist the shafts of his satire. He wrote a long poem entitled, "The Battle of the Sexes," which has been much extolled. He likewise composed a great number of minor poetical pieces which display the fertility of his mind, and the keenness of his wit. He might doubtless have excelled in devotional poetry, if he had devoted himself more to its composition. The hymn on page 48 of our Hymn Book, beginning with "The morning flowers display their sweets," was written by him. Though a powerful satirist, his disposition was generous ; and, it is said, he was esteemed and beloved by all.

Emilia was the eldest daughter of the family. She married a man of the name of Harper, an apothecary of Epworth, who died and left her a young widow. She was a noble woman, and of an affectionate disposition. Her death took place in London about the year 1771.

Mary married Mr. John Whitelamb. This union was formed with the cordial approbation of all the family, and there was all the appearance of domestic enjoyment. But she did not long survive her marriage. Like the rest of the Wesley family, she was "one of the most exalted of human characters." Some verses to her memory

were published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December, 1736.

Anne was married to Mr. John Lambert, a land surveyor, living at Epworth. We are indebted to this wedding for some beautiful verses by Mr. Samuel Wesley the eldest brother.

Susannah was married to Richard Ellison, Esq., a gentleman of good family, and master of a handsome fortune. She was naturally of a kind disposition, and had great vivacity.

John was born at Epworth, on the 17th of June, 1708.

Mehetabel, familiarly called Hetty, was married to a Mr. Wright. The strong understanding, and fine poetic genius, which is found in every branch of this wonderful family, was particularly displayed in this talented woman. She wrote numerous poetical pieces possessing great excellence. Her death took place on March 21st, 1751.

Martha, "from her infancy," we are told, "was distinguished for deep thoughtfulness, for grave and serious deportment, and for an equanimity or evenness of temper, which nothing could discompose." She was married to a clergyman of the name of Hall. The union was very unfortunate; for Hall became licentious both in his principles and practice. She died in London, on July 12th, 1791, having survived all the rest of the family.

Charles, who was the youngest son, was born at Epworth, on December 18th, 1708. When about eight years of age, he was sent to Westminster school where his brother Samuel was

usher. Here it is supposed he received a still stronger bias in favour of high churchism, than he had previously received at Epworth. When he had been at school a considerable time, Garrett Wesley, Esq., a gentleman of large fortune in Ireland, wrote to the Rector of Epworth, wishing to know whether he had a son named Charles, and proposing, if so, to make him his heir. Subsequent to this remarkable proposal being made, the education of Charles was, for some years, regularly paid for by some unknown gentleman. At length, Garrett Wesley, (it was believed) personally waited upon Charles, and conversed freely and at some length with him. He wished to know whether he was willing to go to Ireland. Charles consulted his father about the matter; and his father leaving it to his own choice, he chose to stay in England. The person who inherited the property intended for Charles Wesley, and who took the name of Wesley or Wellesly in consequence, was the first Earl of Mornington, and the grandfather of the Marquis Wellesly and the late Duke of Wellington. If Charles had accepted the proposal, he would have had abundance of riches and honour, but his usefulness in the cause of God would have been crippled, and Methodism would have been robbed of its poet.

In 1726 he was elected a student of Christ Church, Oxford. The first two years were spent, according to his own confession, in thoughtless and profitless diversions; but he afterwards became decidedly serious. In 1735, after he had received ordination, he accompanied his brother,

John, to America, and returned in the latter end of the following year. He now devoted his life to the great work of preaching the gospel, and abundant success followed his ministrations. We shall however speak of him as we proceed in tracing the rise and progress of Methodism.

Kezia, the last of the Wesley family of whom we have any account, was never married. This kind and affectionate woman lived with her sister Martha, till March 9th, 1741, when death ended her earthly career.

These are all the members of the family of old Samuel Wesley, Rector of Epworth, of whom any record is preserved; and we are constrained to exclaim, What a wonderful branch of humanity it was! For learning, piety, and usefulness the Wesley family is probably without a parallel in the annals of the human race. Every member of it was raised above the common level of mankind, and some of them were truly extraordinary characters. From old Bartholomew, down to Kezia, the youngest daughter of the Rector of Epworth, we find them all distinguished by those characteristics which refine and elevate humanity. "Such a family," says Dr. Clarke, "I have never read of, heard of, or known; nor since the days of Abraham and Sarah, and Joseph and Mary, of Nazareth, has there ever been a family to which the human race has been more indebted."

CHAPTER II.—*The state of England before the
rise of Methodism.*

It is universally acknowledged by those who have paid any attention to the subject, that, in the former part of the eighteenth century, at the time when the branches of the Wesley family were blooming in the seclusion of Epworth,—such was the condition of the church in particular, and the country in general, that a reform, both of opinions and manners, had become imperatively necessary. With regard to morals, as well as religion, the condition of the nation was truly deplorable. The superstitions of Popery were disregarded and despised, but the licentiousness of infidelity covered the land. Scepticism and impiety overrun all classes of the people. The rich were wholly regardless of the claims of religion, and even considered vital godliness as the height of fanaticism. The poor were sunk into the lowest depths of vice and degradation, and were familiar with the most barbarous practices. The body of the people being entirely destitute of the vitality of genuine religion, a state of spiritual putrefaction and corruption, was the natural consequence. The nation was depraved; and whatever grows upon the soil of depravity, not only put forth buds and blossoms, but brought forth much fruit, and flourished abundantly. The country was covered with the entire vegetation of iniquity, which being

cherished and preserved, grew on in the wildest luxuriance, and in unlimited profusion. Wickedness flourished, piety languished, and God was forgotten. The deadly Upas tree of sin spread its withering influences throughout the kingdom, and innumerable were the souls which fell victims to its fatal power. Moral ruin, disorder, and crime, reigned over all. Satan, with "mighty wings outspread, dove-like, sat brooding o'er the vast abyss" of our national depravity, and "made it pregnant" with all evil things. Sin abounded upon every hand; and the Great Governor of the world having connected sin and misery together, as cause and effect, the people, being sinful, must have been unhappy. In the corrupt heart of the nation would be found a never-failing fountain, whose streams, spreading and flowing in every direction, would supply the whole body of the people with "lamentations, and mournings, and woe." True religion, with all its heavenly blessings, was nearly banished from the island; and even the *forms* of godliness were treated with either lethargic indifference, or scornful derision. The National Church had lost its aggressiveness and its power. The clergy, with but few exceptions, were, in theory, extremely ignorant of the nature of genuine religion, and practically they were entirely unacquainted with it. Many of them were also as destitute of morality, as they were of religion; for, though they reprov'd and condemned licentiousness from the pulpit, they frequently countenanced and encouraged it by their example. It is not a morbid antipathy to the Established

Church that prompts us to write so strongly of the conduct of the clergy. We mention facts,—facts which cannot be denied. But we do not dwell upon them with rancorous delight, or malicious satisfaction; nor in the spirit of reproach. That the clergy of this century are very different to those of whom we speak, we cheerfully acknowledge; and far be it from us to speak disrespectfully of them, or of our ancient and venerable National Church. All honour be unto the Archbishops, Bishops, and Clergy, of our noble Establishment, and may prosperity and peace attend them! Being a genuine Wesleyan Methodist, I respect the Church of England; and I look upon her blemishes with the same feelings of fond forgiveness, as I look upon the failings of a mother. And I must confess, that I envy not the state of that man's heart who seems to be most delighted when he is holding up to the scorn of a bigoted and excited assembly the real or supposed defects of the Established Church. I love the Church; and could bear with more patience, and could sooner forgive, the intolerance of a high churchmen, than I could the fierce invectives, and blind and furious bigotry, of a low political dissenter. The Church of England, with all her imperfections, is a noble fabric, and I gaze upon it with reverence and admiration.

But however enlightened and holy the bulk of the clergy may be in these days, they were cer-

tainly far otherwise in the former part of the last century; and the people, following the example of their spiritual guides, sank into a state of gross demoralization. Let us hear the testimonies of competent judges upon the subject.

In 1713, Bishop Burnet, referring to the Established Church, remarks, "I cannot look on without the deepest concern when I see the imminent ruin hanging over this church, and by consequence, over the whole Reformation. *The outward state of things is black enough, God knows; but that which heightens my fears, rises chiefly from the inward state into which we are unhappily fallen* "

In 1728, Bishop Gibson, says, "They who live in these great cities (London and Westminster) or have had frequent recourse to them, and have any concern for religion, must have observed to their grief, that profaneness and impiety are grown bold and open; that a new sort of vice of a very horrible nature, and almost unknown before in these parts of the world, was springing up, and gaining ground among us, if it had not been checked by the seasonable care of the civil administration; that in some late writings, public stews have been openly vindicated, and public vices recommended to the protection of government as public benefits; and that great pains have been taken to make men easy in their vices, and deliver them from the restraints of conscience, by undermining all religion, and promoting atheism and infidelity; and what adds to the danger,

by doing it under specious colours and pretences of several kinds."

1729, the Rev. John Hurriou remarks, "The malignant opposition made to him (the Holy Spirit) by some, and the vile contempt cast on him by others, are things which have quenched and grieved him, and caused him to depart to that degree, as hereby *almost all vital religion is lost out of the world*. Hence it is that the glory of God in Christ, the faith, joy, and zeal, of Christians, are under such a cloud at this day."

In 1729 also, Dr. John Guyse exclaims, "How many sermons may one hear that leave out Christ, both name and thing, and that pay no more regard to him than if we had nothing to do with him! What a melancholy symptom, what a threatening omen is this! Do we not already feel its dismal effects in the growth of infidelity, in the rare instances of conversion work, and in the cold, low, and withering state of religion among the professors of it, beyond what has been known in some former days."

In 1731, Dr. Watts, after speaking of the Dissenters, remarks, "Nor is the complaint of the declension of virtue and piety made only by the Protestant Dissenters. It is a general matter of mournful observation amongst all that lay the cause of God to heart; and therefore it cannot be thought amiss for every one to use all just and proper efforts for the *recovery of dying religion in the world*."

In 1734, the Rev. Abraham Taylor mentions "*the great decay of practical religion in this*

nation ;" and this, together with "*the contempt which has been for many years cast on the Holy Spirit and his operations,*" he considers to be "*the grand cause of the corruptions and abominations which abound among us.*" "*The Spirit,*" says he at the same period, "*has been grieved and offended, and he is, in a great measure, withdrawn and gone.*"

In 1736, Bishop Butler says, "It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons that christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now, at length, discovered to be fictitious ; and accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment ; and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world."

In 1738, Archbishop Secker says, "Men have always complained of their own times, and always with too much reason. But though it is natural to think those evils the greatest which we feel ourselves, and therefore mistakes are easily made in comparing one age with another, yet in this we cannot be mistaken, that *an open and professed disregard to religion, is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the present age.*" And he also observes, that there was "such dissoluteness and contempt of principle in the higher part of the world, and such profligate intemperance, and fearlessness of committing crimes, in the lower, as must, if this

torrent of impiety stop not, become absolutely fatal."

Mr. Robert Southey, when alluding to the same period, remarks that the people were "Christians but in name, for the most part in a state of heathen, or worse than, heathen ignorance."

The Rev. Robert Hall likewise says that such doctrines as "the corruption of human nature, the necessity of the new birth, and justification by faith, were either abandoned to oblivion, or held up to ridicule and contempt. The consequence was, that the creed established by law had no sort of influence in forming the sentiments of the people: the pulpit completely vanquished the desk: piety and puritanism were confounded in one common reproach: an almost pagan darkness in the concerns of salvation prevailed; and *the English became the most irreligious people upon earth.*"

Bishop Copleston, when alluding to Mr. Wesley, says, "He found thousands of his countrymen, though nominally Christians, yet as ignorant of true Christianity as infidels and heathens; and in too many instances (it is useless to conceal or disguise the fact) ignorant through the inattention of government in not providing for increased numbers, or through the carelessness and neglect of those whom the National Church had appointed to be their pastors."

And lastly, the Rev. Richard Watson observes, "The body of the clergy neither knew, nor cared about systems of any kind. In a great number

of instances they were immoral, often grossly so. The populace in large towns were ignorant and profligate; the inhabitants of villages added to ignorance and profligacy, brutish and barbarous manners. A more striking instance of the rapid deterioration of religious light and influence in a country scarcely occurs, than in our own, from the Restoration till the rise of Methodism."

Thus we perceive, from unimpeachable testimonies, that this country, before Methodism sprang up, was not only in a most deplorable, but also in a most alarming condition. The land was filled with iniquity, and an overwhelming flood of immorality, infidelity, profanity, and irreligion, had burst upon, and covered the entire nation. Darkness covered the minds of the ministers of religion, and thick darkness enveloped the minds of the great masses of the community. There was a licentious clergy, and a licentious people. The cause of God suffered a most calamitous stagnation, and the whole country was in a state of spiritual bankruptcy. This was the condition of the nation before the rise of Methodism. But we shall presently see that this dark and dismal "valley of dry bones;" this land of spiritual death and desolation,—received the vivifying, animating, influence of the Holy Spirit, and then arose "an exceeding great army" of men, full of spiritual life, and zealous in the cause of God. Through the powerful preaching, and active, but unwearied labours, of John Wesley and his coadjutors, the country was aroused from the drowsy lethargy into which it had fallen with

regard to spiritual things, and genuine religion began to revive and flourish with the most astonishing rapidity. The sun of Methodism burst unexpectedly upon the chaotic mass of our national wickedness, dissipating the gloomy shades of scepticism, and dispelling the thick darkness of accumulated ignorance and impiety.

CHAPTER III.—*The early life of John Wesley.*

JOHN WESLEY, as we have before remarked, was born on June 17, 1703, at Epworth, in Lincolnshire. Humanly speaking, he owed his existence to very precarious circumstances. His parents having disagreed concerning King William, his father left his mother, and went up to London. Here he attended the Convocation, and did not return home during the year. The death of the king, however, putting a termination to the disagreement, the Rector of Epworth returned to his wife, and John Wesley was the first-fruits of their happy re-union. This remarkable circumstance caused him to say, "Were I to write my own life, I should begin it *before I was born.*"

When he was about six years of age the parsonage-house was burnt to the ground; and his

escape from the furious flames may justly be considered miraculous. He was the last in the burning building, and was rescued a moment before the roof fell in, which would have inevitably destroyed him. When old Mr. Wesley found himself surrounded by his wife and children, little Jacky even being safely among them, he exclaimed, "Let the house go, I am rich enough." The memory of this providential deliverance was preserved by Mr. Wesley in one of his early prints. Beneath his portrait there was engraven a house in flames, with this inscription appended, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the burning."

His excellent mother, who, with never-ceasing anxiety, trained up all her children in the way they should go, considered, that this wonderful deliverance of her son John laid her under a peculiar obligation to instruct *his* mind, and regulate *his* heart. Thus, in a beautiful meditation composed a short time after the conflagration took place, she says, with regard to him and his escape from the fire, "I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child that thou hast so mercifully provided for, than ever I have been, that I may do my endeavour to instil into his mind the principles of thy true religion and virtue. Lord give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently, and bless my attempts with good success." Having such a pious and intelligent mother, was to him an unspeakable advantage. She spared no trouble, she withheld no attention, so that to her exertions (under God) may be awarded the praise of forming the charac-

ter of her celebrated son. This especial carefulness on her part appears to have been accompanied and followed with the most happy results ; for at eight years of age he was so decidedly serious that his father permitted him to partake of the sacrament of the Lord's supper.

In April, 1712, he, with four others of the children, had the small pox : and, it seems, he manifested considerable patience under his affliction ; for his father being in London, his mother wrote to him as follows :—" Jack has bore his disease bravely like a man, and indeed like a christian, without any complaint, though he seemed angry at the small-pox when they were sore ; so we guessed by him looking sourly at them, *for he never said anything.*

In 1714 he was placed at the Charter House where he was noticed, as a biographer observes, "for his diligence and progress in learning." He became a favourite with Dr. Walker, the Head Master, because of his seriousness and constant application.

In 1719, he was sent to Westminster School, a place celebrated all over Europe. Here he made great and rapid progress in the Greek and Hebrew languages. His father hesitating at this period what should be done with his third son, Charles Wesley, who was now about 11 years of age, the elder brother Samuel, who was at Westminster School, wrote to the Rector of Epworth, saying, " My brother Jack, I can faithfully assure you, gives you no manner of discouragement from breeding your third son a scholar." And in two

or three months afterwards he remarks concerning him, "Jack is with me, and a brave boy, learning Hebrew as fast as he can."

In 1720, he went to Oxford, and entered a student at Christ Church College. He was under the direction of Dr. Wigan, who is said to have been "a gentleman eminent for his classical knowledge." Here he followed his various studies with great application and great success. Divinity and languages did not wholly engross his attention, for he also went through a regular course of medical study. He quickly took his degree of Bachelor of Arts. When he was about 21 years of age, "He appeared," as Mr. Baddock observed of him, "the very sensible and acute collegian; a young fellow of the finest classical taste, of the most liberal and manly sentiments." And Dr. Whitehead also observes, "His perfect knowledge of the classics give a smooth polish to his wit, and an air of superior elegance to all his compositions."

Various pieces of poetry which he composed about this period render it obvious that, in addition to his other accomplishments, he possessed considerable poetic abilities. His paraphrase of the 104th Psalm is eminently distinguished both for grandeur of conception, and beauty of language. But he did not much cultivate his talent for poetry, believing that he had more important work to perform.

In the year 1725, he met with Bishop Taylor's "Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying," some parts of which he says, "exceed-

ingly affected" him, especially that part relating to purity of intention. He at once resolved to dedicate himself,—his thoughts, words, and actions, wholly to God.

On September 19, he was ordained Deacon by Dr. Potter, Bishop of Oxford, and soon afterwards he preached his first sermon at South Leigh, within two miles of Witney, in Oxfordshire.

In 1726, he met with Kempis's "Christian Pattern," which more strongly impressed him, than even Bishop Taylor's work had done, with the necessity of "inward, heart-felt, religion." These serious impressions were still more deepened by the perusal of Mr. Law's "Christian Perfection," and "Serious Call;" and he fully determined, by the grace of God, to be a thorough christian; to be both inwardly and outwardly holy; to devote his body, soul, spirit, and substance, wholly to his Maker.

On March 17, he was elected Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. "His literary character," says one of his biographers, "was now established in the University; he was acknowledged by all parties to be a man of talents, and an excellent critic in the learned languages. His compositions were distinguished by an elegant simplicity of style, and justness of thought, that strongly marked the excellence of his classical taste. His skill in logic, or the art of reasoning, was universally known and admired. The high opinion that was entertained of him in these respects was soon publicly expressed by choosing him Greek lecturer and moderator of the classes, on the 7th

of November, 1726, though he had only been elected Fellow of the College in March, was little more than 23 years of age, and had not proceeded Master of Arts."

On February 14, 1727, he took the degree of Master of Arts, and acquired considerable reputation by the dexterity with which he disputed for it. He delivered three lectures upon the occasion;—one on Natural Philosophy, *De Anima Brutorum*; another on Moral Philosophy, *De Julio Casare*; and a third on Religion, *De Amore Dei*; but they are all unhappily lost.

His time was now divided as follows; Mondays and Tuesdays were devoted to the Greek and Roman classics, historians and poets. Wednesdays to logic and ethics. Thursdays to Hebrew and Arabic. Fridays to metaphysics and natural philosophy. Saturdays to oratory and poetry, chiefly composing. Sundays to divinity. In the intermediate hours he perfected himself in the French language, and read many modern and miscellaneous works.

On August 4th, 1727, he left the University of Oxford, and went to be his father's Curate at Epworth and Wroote. On October 16th, he visited Oxford to oblige Dr. Morley, the only man in the country to whom he could deny nothing. On October 25th, he returned to his father's curacy. On July 28th, he went to the University again; and on September 22nd, he was ordained priest by Bishop Potter, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. On October 1st, he returned into Lincolnshire; and on June

1729, visited Oxford again. In the middle of August he returned to his charge in the country. Dr. Morley, the Rector of his College now requiring the permanent residence of Mr. Wesley at the University, he resigned his Curacy, Epworth, and on November 22nd, 1729, settled at Oxford.

His brother Charles, who was also there, had for some time disregarded his exhortations to seriousness of deportment, and holiness of life. saying, "*Would you have me to be a saint all at once?*" but when Mr. Wesley arrived at the College, Charles had so happily changed his views and conduct, that he, and one or two other young men, had formed themselves into a select religious society: and Mr. Wesley says of him, "I found him in great earnestness to save his soul."

Mr. Wesley now obtained pupils, became tutor in the College, and presided as moderator in the disputations six times a week. He likewise became the leader and director of the small, but earnest religious society, which had been formed in his absence: and thus, notwithstanding the abuse and ridicule which was plentifully bestowed upon him, he stood prominently forward as a decidedly religious man. This little band of zealous and faithful men, with Mr. Wesley at its head, was universally known and unscrupulously opposed and ridiculed. They were at first only four in number, including Mr. Wesley; and they regularly met together for reading and conversation, in order to render themselves wiser, holier, and happier men. They likewise visited, and

imparted religious instruction to the prisoners confined in Oxford Castle; besides spending some hours every week in visiting and relieving many afflicted and destitute people in the neighbourhood. They voluntarily sacrificed all the superfluities, and some of the so-called necessities of life; and subjected themselves to a course of unremitting and severe self-denial. The rigorous fasting practised by Mr. John Wesley, is thus alluded to, by his elder brother Samuel when writing to Charles :

"One or two questions more, before I end,
"That much concern a brother and a friend.
"Does John seem bent beyond his strength to go,
"To his frail carcase literally foe :
"Lavish of health, as if in haste to die,
"And shorten time, to ensure eternity ?"

The general tenor of their behaviour corresponded with their professions and particular practices. They were not only rigid in fasting, and regular in their attendance upon the ordinances of God, but were remarkably serious in their whole deportment, and scrupulously exact in their lives.

It was impossible for such strange and extraordinary conduct to pass unnoticed by their fellow collegians. As might be expected, all kinds of obnoxious epithets were bestowed upon them. They strictly observed the ancient fasts of the church, and were therefore dubbed *Supererogation-men*. They regularly partook of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and were consequently called *Sacramentarians*. They revered and stu-

died the word of God, and so were named *Bible-moths* and *Bible-bigots*. They were zealous for what they knew to be the cause of God, and were therefore derided as *Enthusiasts*; and their holiness and godliness procured them the abusive, yet honourable titles of the *Holy Club*, and the *Godly Club*; but in consequence of the strictness and exact *method* of their lives, the appellation of "*Methodists*" enveloped the other designations, and became general; so that Mr. Wesley himself remarks, "the *Methodists* were known all over the University."

Though they were continually attacked with the greatest violence and injustice, we are informed by Mr. Gambold, who knew Mr. Wesley and his brother Charles at the time, that "they seldom took any notice of the accusations brought against them for their charitable employments." And Mr. Wesley himself, when writing to Mr. Morgan, observes, "As for the names of Methodists, Supererogation-men, and so on, with which some of our neighbours are pleased to compliment us, we do not conceive ourselves to be under any obligation to regard them, much less to take them for arguments."

They thus pursued the even tenor of their way, and meekly bore the constant showers of reproaches which were so liberally poured upon them. But they were not left entirely destitute of friendly sympathy and encouragement. The Rev. Samuel Wesley, the eldest of the family, though a very high churchman, wrote to Mr. Wesley as follows: "I cannot say I thought you

always in everything right ; but I must now say rather than you and Charles should give over your whole course, especially what relates to the Castle, I would choose to follow either of you, nay both of you, to your graves. I cannot advise you better than in the words I proposed for a motto to a pamphlet, ' Stand thou steadfast as a beaten anvil ; for it is the part of a good champion to be flayed alive, and to conquer.' "

Towards the latter end of the year 1780, Mr. Wesley wrote to his father for advice. He wished to know whether they had gone too far or otherwise ; and whether it would be advisable to proceed. A christian letter was returned, dated September 21, 1780, wherein the Rector of Epworth stated that he *greatly approved* of their " designs and employments : " and says, " Go on then, in God's name, in the path to which your Saviour has directed you, and that tract wherein your father has gone before you. For when I was an undergraduate at Oxford I visited those in the Castle there, and reflect on it with great satisfaction to this day. Walk as prudently as you can, though not fearfully, and my heart and prayers are with you." In another letter dated December 1, 1780, which the Rector wrote in answer to the inquiries and consultation of Mr. Wesley, he says, " Preserve an equal temper of mind under whatever treatment you meet with, from a not very just or well-natured world. Bear no more sail than is necessary, but steer steady." And the Rector concludes another truly christian and valuable letter thus : " I hear my son John has the honour

of being styled the father of the Holy Club ; if it be so, I am sure I must be the grandfather of it ; and I need not say that I had rather any of my sons should be so dignified and distinguished, than to have the title of His Holiness."

They were thus encouraged to press forward in the same line of conduct in which they had begun. Bearing with meekness the scoffing and sneering of their irreligious fellow collegians, and entirely disregarding their own ease and reputation, they fully devoted themselves to love and good-works.

In the beginning of the year 1731, a meeting of the seniors of the College was held, to consult upon the speediest way to stop the progress of *enthusiasm* in it. The result of this meeting of these devoted servants of God did not transpire ; but it was soon publicly reported that a certain doctor and the pious censors, were going to blow up the " Godly Club."

On April 18th, Mr. Wesley and his brother Charles both set out for Epworth *on foot* ; for they saved all the money they could to give to the friendless and needy. They returned to the University on the 12th of May.

At the close of the year 1731, the Rector of Epworth himself visited Oxford ; and in a letter he wrote to Mrs. Wesley, his wife, he says he was well repaid for the trouble and expense of his journey, by the " shining piety" of his " two sons." But it must be remembered that though the " two sons" were so scrupulously exact in their attendance upon all the ordinances of God, and devoted themselves so entirely to the performance of christian duties, yet they had not

that faith which bringeth the "joy unspeakable;" and of this great deficiency they had not yet become sensible.

During the summer of the year 1732, Mr. John Wesley made one journey to London, and two to Epworth. These and other journies he performed on foot. He thus inured himself to fatigue and labour, and had a larger amount of money to distribute among the poor, according to his custom. "In these excursions," we are told "he constantly preached on the Lord's day; so that he might now be called in some degree, an itinerant preacher."

The little society at Oxford was, at this period, in a very deplorable condition. In consequence of the hostility and persecution which they had to encounter, first one, and then several others, cowardly deserted from the righteous cause, and Mr. Wesley, and his brother Charles, were left standing almost alone. But *they* stood firm; and no opposition whatever could shake *them* from the position in which God had placed them.

The year 1734 arrived, and a severe trial of Mr. Wesley's feelings was now awaiting him.—His father was gradually but rapidly sinking into the tomb; and, in common with his family and parishioners, he desired that his son John should succeed him in the Rectorship of Epworth. But John Wesley declined. Every consideration was offered, which might possibly induce him to alter his decision, but they were offered in vain. He drew up his objections under twenty-six heads, and sent them in a long letter to his father. These objections he considered unanswerable. H

therefore determined still to remain at Oxford, and nothing could shake him from his purpose. His brother Samuel, after fruitlessly endeavouring to persuade him to choose the Rectory, concluded by saying, that "none could move his mind but HE that made it." If he had consulted his own ease and advantage, he would unquestionably have yielded to the earnest solicitations of his father and family, and have chosen to reside at Epworth : but he believed that he might be more holy and useful at the University, than in a private village, and having this conviction, nothing could move him. This was truly a crisis in his history. If he had not considered that his duty to God, and to his fellow-men, required his continuance at Oxford, where would have been that great revival of evangelical religion called Wesleyan Methodism ? We might perhaps have known a John Wesley, the celebrated Rector of Epworth ; but there would have been no John Wesley, the founder of a great religious society. Oxford Methodism would have withered and died, and have become merely an unimportant fact of history. Wesleyan Methodism would never have existed at all. Who is so blind as not to see the hand of Providence guiding Mr. Wesley at this critical period ?

In the beginning of 1735, he preached extemporaneously for the first time, in All Hallow's Church, Lombard Street, London. Dr. Heylyn was expected to preach, but failing to come. Mr. Wesley was requested to officiate in his stead, and complied, though he had no notes with him. To preach extempore, was at that time, considered a most extraordinary experiment.

CHAPTER IV.—*Mr. Wesley's visit to Georgia : his return to England : his conversion : and his success in preaching.*

About the middle of 1735 the trustees of the new colony of Georgia, in America, desiring to send out some clergymen to that place, fixed upon Mr. John Wesley, and some of his friends at Oxford, as the most proper persons for this important and laborious service. Mr. Wesley for some time hesitated, being unwilling to leave the obscurity of a college life ; but having consulted his mother and his friends upon the subject, he consented to the proposal. Having made all necessary preparation for the voyage, he, on October 14th, 1735, embarked for Georgia. His brother Charles, Mr. Benjamin Ingham, (one of the Oxford Methodists,) and Mr. C. Delamotte, the son of a London merchant, accompanied him. "Our end," says he, in his published Journal, which commences on the day of his embarkation, "in leaving our native country was not to avoid want ; God had given us plenty of temporal blessings ; nor to gain the dung and dross of riches and honour ; but singly this, to save our souls, to live wholly to the glory of God."

It must be remembered that his views of divine truth were, even at this period, very defective. At the request of some of his friends he published a sermon before he left England, preached at St. Mary's, Oxford, on Sunday, September 21st, 1735, upon "The trouble and rest of good men ;" and from it, it is evident that some

of his opinions were considerably erroneous. The sermon he published some years after upon "The Scripture way of Salvation" is a sufficient antidote to the errors of sentiment, and misapprehensions of divine truth, contained in that talented, but faulty, discourse.

During his passage to Georgia, Mr. Wesley became acquainted with some pious Moravians, and he received a very favourable impression of these devoted men. Their humility and meekness excited his wonder and admiration. Their disregard of death was equally an object of his astonishment. They showed him it was possible to live without the fear of death; for when the sea roared, they sung: and even when it appeared that the ship and all the passengers were to be destroyed together, they were not afraid. The turbulence of a raging ocean could not ruffle the serene tranquility which rested upon their bosoms; and they smiled with calm and settled composure at the threatenings and menaces of the monster death. "Thus he had," as it has been finely and truly remarked, "the first glimpse of a religious experience which keeps the mind at peace in all circumstances, and vanquishes that feeling which a formal and defective religion may lull to a temporary sleep, but cannot eradicate,—the fear of death."

Mr. Wesley was not idle during the voyage, but was constantly employed either in reading, writing, praying, or preaching. His time was divided and arranged with the greatest exactness, so that one duty and employment was effectually

prevented from encroaching upon another. In order to be enabled to converse with the pious and devoted Germans, he began to learn the German language ; and, to increase the severity of his self-denial, he wholly abandoned the use of flesh, wine, and suppers. It is also worthy of observation, that the first time he ever preached in the open air, was upon the deck of the ship, on his passage to Georgia. They landed on February 6th, 1736.

Mr. Wesley took charge of Savannah, and Frederica was allotted to his brother Charles. Difficulties of a most formidable nature soon arose at Frederica, and Charles was treated with great disrespect. He had to encounter the violent opposition of the colonists, who formed plots against him, either to ruin him in the opinion of the Governor, (General Oglethorpe, to whom he was clerical secretary,) or to carry him off by violence ; the whole scheme of which detestable villany was subsequently exposed. After he had recovered from a dangerous fever, he was, in July, 1736, sent back to England, with despatches to the trustees and the board of trade ; "thus terminating" as Mr. Watson observes, "a service in which he had preached with great fidelity and zeal, but had met with very unworthy returns."

Mr. Wesley, finding that he could not preach the gospel to the Indians, (as was his original design,) turned his attention and care to the flock of Savannah. He advised, 1st: The more serious among them to form themselves into a sort of little society, and meet once or twice a week, in

order to improve, instruct, and exhort one another. 2nd : To select out of these, a smaller number, for a more intimate union with each other. "There," says Dr. Whitehead, "we see the first rudiments of the future economy of classes and bands."

Mr. Wesley occasionally visited Frederica, but he met with much violent opposition, as his brother Charles had done before him. Savannah, however, his regular field of labour, was very different ; and he was fast rising in the estimation of the people, and in influence, when some unpleasant, but certainly not unfortunate, circumstances took place, which, though not at all to the discredit of Mr. Wesley, eventually caused him to abandon Georgia altogether. By repelling a lady,—a Mrs. Williamson,—from the Holy Communion, he aroused the enmity of her relations and friends, and a violent storm arose. Litigation followed ; and he attended six or seven times before the magistrates to explain the case, and answer for himself : but finding there was no possibility of obtaining justice,—the proceedings being stamped with infamy,—and having now but little prospect of success in the colony, he gave public notice of his intention to depart for England. He embarked for this country in the beginning of December, 1737, having served this fretful and dissatisfied colony as a minister, one year and nearly nine months. We are informed that "his health whilst in America continued good ; and it is a proof of the natural vigour of his constitution, that he exposed himself to every change of season, frequently slept on the

ground, under the dews of night in summer, and in winter with his hair and clothes frozen to the earth."

His time during his stay in America was not squandered away, but was fully and usefully employed. His labours were abundant. His constant diligence was amazing. In addition to his other numerous employments, he made himself acquainted with the Spanish language, that he might be enabled to converse with the Jewish parishioners; and he regularly read prayers in French, German, and Italian.

He arrived in London on February 3rd, 1738 : Mr. George Whitfield (who had been connected with him at Oxford) having embarked the day before for America to assist him.

Notwithstanding the numerous difficulties, and the variety of misfortunes, which Mr. Wesley had met with in this missionary enterprize, he reviews it with cheerful satisfaction. "Many reasons," says he, "I have to bless God (though the design I went upon did not take effect,) for my having been carried into that strange land contrary to all my preceding resolutions. Hereby, I trust, he hath, in some measure, humbled me, and proved me, and shown me what was in my heart. Hereby I have been taught to 'beware of men.' Hereby I am come to know assuredly that if in all our ways we acknowledge God, he will, where reason fails, direct our paths, by lot, or by the other means which he knoweth. Hereby I was delivered from the fear of the sea, which I had both dreaded and abhorred from my youth. Hereby God hath given

me to know many of his servants, particularly those of the church of Hernhuth. Hereby my passage is open to the writings of holy men in the German, Spanish, and Italian tongues. All in Georgia have heard the word of God; some have believed and began to run well. A few steps have been taken towards publishing the glad tidings both to African and American heathens. Many children have learned how they ought to serve God, and be useful to their neighbour. And those whom it most concerns, have an opportunity of knowing the state of their infant colony, and laying a firmer foundation of peace and happiness to many generations."

On his return from Georgia he became very deeply impressed with the sinful condition of his heart. He felt, and confessed his own utter helplessness, and seemed near to the entrance of the 'narrow way.' "It is now," says he, "two years and almost four months since I left my native country, in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of christianity. But what have I learned myself in the meantime? Why (what I the least of all expected,) that I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God." He was destitute of genuine, saving faith; and he, therefore, confesses that all his philosophy, divinity, and every species of learning; his spiritual gifts and graces; his charity, his labours, and his self-denial; his strict morality, his orthodoxy, and his attendance upon all the means of grace; yea all he ever did or could know, say, give, do, or suffer, could not

justify him in the sight of God, nor give him "a claim to the holy, heavenly, divine character of a christian."

But though he was thus fully convinced of the impossibility of attaining the favour of God by doing good works, and was equally convinced of the absolute necessity of having faith in Jesus Christ, in order to the attainment of present salvation, yet the nature of this saving faith, he did not, at present, clearly understand. Fortunately, however, he became acquainted with Peter Bohler, a pious and learned Moravian, who in several conversations largely explained to him the nature of genuine faith in Christ; replied to his objections; and finally overcame the pre-possessions of his mind. "My brother," said Peter on one occasion, "that philosophy of yours must be purged away." And whatever "philosophy" did obstruct the working of the Holy Spirit was in reality soon "purged away;" for on May 24th, 1738, he believed in Christ to the salvation of his soul. He says, "In the evening I went, very unwillingly, to a society in Aldersgate street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle of Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sin, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." "After this," says Mr. Watson, "he had some struggles with

doubt ; but he proceeded from strength to strength till he could say, ' Now I was always conqueror.' This experience, nurtured by habitual prayer, and deepened by unwearied exertions in the cause of his Saviour, settled into that steadfast faith, and solid peace, which the grace of God perfected in him to the close of his long and active life."

When Mr. Wesley returned from Georgia he was anxious to retire to Oxford and hide himself in his beloved seclusion ; but being detained a considerable time by the trustees of the colony, he preached in several churches in London, crowds of people flocking to hear him. He had done this before his conversion ; but when he really experienced the force of the truths he preached, he proclaimed them with great energy and great success. Having now, in particular, a practical knowledge of salvation from past and present sin, through faith in Christ, he preached that glorious doctrine with amazing power and perseverance ; and from this period he continued that laborious ministry which was so eminently successful in the salvation of souls.

In May, 1738, he joined with some persons calling themselves Moravians, but who were chiefly members of the Church of England, in a little society, which from this time regularly met in Fetter lane, London. Mr. Wesley's propensity to either find societies or make them, was remarkable. He ever considered that frequent intercourse and conversation upon spiritual things, was absolutely necessary to preserve the life of God in the soul of man.

In June he visited Hernhuth, in Germany, to enjoy the company and spiritual conversation of the pious Moravians who dwelt there. He spent a very happy time with these holy people; for the opinion which he had formed of them, from the conduct of the few who went in the same ship with himself to Georgia, was not erroneous. His expectations were abundantly realized. "I was exceedingly comforted" says he, "and strengthened by the conversation of this lovely people; and returned to England more fully determined to spend my life in testifying the gospel of the grace of God." He arrived in London on September 16th, 1738.

He now devoted himself to the great work of preaching the gospel; and wherever he preached, salvation by faith was his theme. This great doctrine, though clearly laid down in the articles and homilies of the Established Church, had been entirely overlooked and forgotten by the great bulk of the clergy. Thus when Mr. Wesley preached it, he was ignorantly considered as preaching strange doctrine; and the churches in London were, accordingly, all closed against him. He then went to Bristol, and being also denied the use of the churches there, he resumed the custom he had begun in a warmer climate, viz. preaching in the open air. The first time he did it in this country was on April 2nd, 1739, on an eminence near to Bristol, to more than two thousand people. This practice he continued till the end of his life.

On May 12th, 1739, the first stone of a preaching house at Bristol was laid by Mr. Wesley. He settled the building upon eleven feoffees, but, being convinced by a letter from Mr. Whitfield that these men had too much power, (for they could have hindered even himself from preaching in the place if they had thought proper,) he called them all together, cancelled the writings, and, trusting in God for direction and finances, took the management of the whole affair into his own hands.

In June, the foundation stone of a school for the education of the children of the colliers, was laid at Kingswood; but the school itself was not completed till about two years after.

About this time it was commonly reported in Bristol and elsewhere, that Mr. Wesley was a Papist, and, probably a Jesuit. It was further reported, that he was born and bred at Rome, "which," says he, "many cordially believed."

On October 15th, in compliance with an earnest solicitation, he set out for Wales. The churches here, like those in London, Bristol, and other places, were closed against him, and he was therefore obliged to preach in private houses, and in the open air. This was the commencement of Methodism in Wales.

In this year, (1739,) the first Methodist Hymn Book was published. It bore the following title, "Hymns and Sacred Poems, by Messrs. John and Charles Wesley." The second was published in the year 1742.

On November 11th, Mr. Wesley preached in a building in Moorfields, called the Foundry, so named because of having been formerly used by Government for casting cannon. This was the first preaching house opened by Mr. Wesley for his own use. It afterwards became celebrated in the history of Methodism, but it always retained its original designation.

During all this time not only Mr. Wesley, but likewise his brother Charles, was constantly, zealously, and successfully preaching the gospel to vast numbers of people. The country, accordingly, began to feel the influence of these itinerant preachers. Sinners in abundance were converted to God, and a revolution was even wrought in the conduct of those far-famed ruffians, the Kingswood colliers. These strange proceedings, as might be expected, caused much excitement and alarm. The clergy, in particular, stood aghast at such extraordinary doings. Much opposition consequently followed, but nothing could damp the ardent energy of Mr. Wesley and his brother Charles. "And all their zeal," as it has been remarked, "was supported and made more noticeable by the moral elevation of their character. Their conduct was scrupulously hallowed; their spirit gentle, tender, and sympathising; their courage bold and undaunted; their patience proof against all reproach, hardships, and persecutions; their charities to the poor abounded to the full extent of all their resources; their labours were wholly gratuitous; and their wonderful ac-

tivity, and endurance of the fatigue of rapid travelling, seemed to destroy the distance of place, and to give them a sort of ubiquity in the vast circuit which they had then adopted as the field of their labours. For all these reasons they 'were men to be wondered at,' even in this infancy of their career: and as their ardour was increased by the effects which followed,—the conversion of great numbers to God, of which the most satisfactory evidence was afforded,—it disappointed those who anticipated that their zeal would soon cool, and that 'shorn of their strength' by opposition, reproach, and exhausting labours, they would become 'like other men.'"

In the latter end of the year 1739 the Methodist Society was instituted. Mr. Wesley, however, divides the rise of Methodism into several distinct periods. First, at Oxford, in November, 1729, when he and his brother Charles and a few other young men formed a little society there. Second, at Savannah, in April 1736, when he commenced meeting several pious persons in his own house, and gave them advice and instruction. Third, in Fetter lane, in 1738. And the fourth period of Methodism, in the latter end of November, 1739, when he began to meet some serious people regularly once a week in London, in order to advise them how to "flee from the wrath to come." This was, in reality, the commencement of the present Methodist Society.

CHAPTER V.—*The rise of the Methodist Society.*

The term "*Methodist*" was anciently used to designate certain Roman physicians who prescribed from theory, and treated their patients according to fixed rules, and in a regular *method*. The designation continued during several ages, and many of the physicians to whom it was applied, appear to have been eminent in the profession.

In the early part of the 17th century, some plain and simple religious people in this country were called *Methodists*. In a sermon preached at Lambeth in 1689, the preacher exclaims, "Where are now our Anabaptists, and plain pack-staff *Methodists*, who esteem all flowers no better than stinking weeds, and all elegancies of speech, no better than profane spells?" And in the latter part of the 17th century, the term was frequently applied in reproach to the Nonconformists.

It was by a very easy and natural transition, that the same term was, in derision, employed to designate certain young men at the University of Oxford in the year 1729, who were distinguished by the seriousness of their deportment, and regularity of their lives. It was first given to Mr. Charles Wesley. He says, "My first year at college I lost in diversions: the next I set myself to study. Diligence led me into serious thinking. I went to the weekly sacrament, and persuaded

two or three young students to accompany me, and to observe the *method* of study prescribed by the statutes of the University. This gained me the harmless name of *Methodist*." The disciples of Christ were first called christians at Antioch: the Wesleys and their followers were first called *Methodists* at Oxford. This quaint designation, being so remarkably appropriate, became the general distinguishing appellation, not only of the young men at the University, but likewise of Mr. Wesley's followers ever afterwards.

The rise of the present Methodist Society is fully explained, and the rules for the guidance of its members are clearly laid down in a document published by Mr. Wesley, and entitled, "The nature, design, and general rules of the united societies in London, Bristol, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, &c." Mr. Wesley says, "In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to me in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired, (as did two or three more the next day,) that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That we might have more time for this great work, I appointed a time when they might all come together; which, from thenceforward, they did every week, viz: on Thursday in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them (for their number increased daily,) I gave those advices

from time to time which I judged most needful for them; and we always concluded our meetings with prayer suitable to their several necessities.

"This was the rise of the United Society, first in London, and then in other places. Such a society is no other than "a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness: united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation."

"There is one only condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies, viz: 'a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and be saved from their sins.' But wherever this is really fixed in the soul, it will be shown by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation;

"First, by doing no harm:" such as swearing, sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, &c. &c.

"Secondly, by doing good,"—such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting and helping those that are sick or in prison, &c. &c.

"Thirdly, by attending upon all the ordinances of God,"—such as the public worship of God, the Lord's supper, &c. &c.

This, be it observed, is Mr. Wesley's own account of the rise of the United or Methodist Societies; and these are, in abstract, the rules which he laid down for the regulation of the conduct of the members. The entire rules, as contained in this document, either are, or ought to

to be, in the hands of every Methodist. They have been the acknowledged standard and test of conduct ever since they were drawn up, and they continue so at the present time. It is easy to perceive that they contain the very essence of practical christianity.

The members of the United Society were universally called *Methodists*. They did not choose the designation, but were obliged to suffer it. It was given in derision and contempt, and the reproachful epithet continually clung to them. The term was considered so disgraceful in those days, that to call a man a *Methodist* was equal to calling him a mad dog or a fool. When Mr. Wesley used the term, he sometimes marked it as being given to the people by others. He did so, even towards the latter end of his life, for he entitled the large hymn book he published, "A collection of Hymns, for the use of the people called *Methodists*."

And what is a *Methodist*? "A man who lives according to the *method* laid down in the bible," says Mr. Wesley, in his English Dictionary. He always considered a genuine Methodist to be a genuine christian; and Methodism to be the *work of God*. "*Methodism so-called*," says he, "is the old religion, the religion of the Bible, the religion of the Primitive Church, the religion of the Church of England." "If I am asked," says the great Dr. Chalmers, "What is Methodism? I should say it is christianity in earnest."

Methodism was, in some measure, a revival of neglected doctrines of scripture; but it was

chiefly a revival of vital and practical godliness, of inward and outward holiness.

And how did Methodism arise? Not because of the *envy* of its founder. He envied not those persons who were in more honourable positions in the church than himself. "Pale envy, that withers at another's joy," never found an entrance into *his* pure bosom. Nor did it owe its origin to *disappointment* in attempting to procure preferment. The founder of Methodism never sought nor desired promotion, and he was therefore never disappointed. *Hatred of authority*, or *impatience of control* did not prompt it. *Love of power* was not the root of it. *Ambition to be at the head of a party* was not the moving spring. No quarrel with the doctrines or discipline of the Established Church was the cause. He complained not of despotism, nor had he any desire to revolutionize or liberalize the laws of the church he loved. Methodism was not begun by a secret, anti-christian conspiracy, formed against the Establishment or its ministers. No anonymous pamphlets, fiercely attacking the characters of the clergy emanated from his pen. There was no malicious imputation of corrupt or dishonourable motives; no searching for delinquencies; no retailing of slander. Inflammatory speeches were not delivered by Mr. Wesley throughout the country, upon the wickedness of the national clergy, or the rottenness of the national church. Methodism did not arise in any wrong feelings, nor because of any wrong conduct. No hostility of parties; no religious disturbance; no spiritual

squabble, originated Methodism. It owes its rise (under God) to the fervent piety, and burning zeal of John Wesley.

Methodism, be it observed, was not a secession from the Establishment. Mr. Wesley earnestly exhorted all his people to attend the Church. Thus it was a religious society formed within her pale. It was a circle within a circle; a church within a church. Mr. Wesley reprobated "*splits*;" he abhorred divisions. Thus, when it was objected that by forming the people into societies, he divided the members of the Church, he smartly retorted, "We divide them by uniting them together! Truly, a very uncommon way of dividing!" Mr. Wesley was a faithful and zealous churchman. He was no secessionist; he was no dissenter. He lived and died, a member and a minister of the Established Church.

The Methodists, it will be noticed, were joined by Mr. Wesley into a *society*. He told the serious persons who came to ask him for advice, to meet together on Thursday evenings, and promised that he would meet with them. The number, it appears, increased continually. "Twelve," says he, "came the first Thursday night; forty the second, soon after, a hundred." This was the rise of the Methodist society; first in London, and then in other places; for wherever Mr. Wesley went, he formed societies. Herein was Mr. Wesley's strength; the neglect of this was Mr. Whitfield's weakness. Mr. Wesley, instead of allowing the hundreds and thousands convinced and converted under his ministry to be scattered abroad and lost, carefully gathered them together

into societies, and thus preserved the fruit of his labours. Mr. Whitfield preached powerfully, and with great success, but his genius not being constructive, he neglected to join his converts together, and they were consequently dispersed among the masses. The final result, therefore, of his labours, when compared with Mr. Wesley's, was small and insignificant. "The fruit of Mr. Whitfield's labours," says Dr. Adam Clarke, "died with himself. Mr. Wesley's fruit remains, grows, increases, and multiplies exceedingly. Did Mr. Whitfield see his error? He did, but not until it was too late." "My brother Wesley," once said Mr. Whitfield, "acted wisely. The souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined in class, and thus preserved the fruits of his labours. This I neglected, and my people are a rope of sand." "And what now remains of this great man's labours?" continues Dr. Clarke, "Multitudes were converted under his ministry, and are gone to God; but there is no spiritual succession."

Not only were the Methodists gathered by Mr. Wesley into societies, but these societies were *united* to each other. Mr. Wesley called them, "*United societies.*" They were not *independent* of one another, having separate and antagonistic interests. *That* would have been ruinous to the whole work of God. Congregational independency would have been christianity in impotency; whereas Methodist connexionalism was christianity in resistless power. The various societies were *united together* in bonds of sympathy and affection, and *united* to

Mr. Wesley as their common head. He was the father of the family ; the great centre of unity ; the key-stone of the arch ; the sun of the system. He was the centre of attraction and gravitation : everything was attracted by him ; everything revolved around him ; and everything depended upon him for regular motion. He gave the same rules for the regulation of the conduct of his people in whatever part of the country they might be found. The various societies were governed by the same laws, and had the same preachers. Thus they were all closely connected with each other ; and Mr. Wesley firmly and unflinchingly mentioned them in one connexion. He would rather have sacrificed half these societies than have abandoned the connexional principle. He considered *that* sacred and inviolable. If he had not firmly maintained, and tenaciously clung to this great principle, where would now have been the societies which he formed in London and other places ? And how would the poor people in our country villages have been supplied with the bread of life ?

The terms of admission into the Methodist society were very liberal, some would think liberal to an extreme. The condition required of persons previous to their entrance into the society was merely "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and be saved from their sins." This was the original condition, and it has remained the only condition ever since. And nothing could be more proper. To refuse a man admission into a christian society, to deny him the benefits of

religious fellowship, (whatever may be his opinions upon minor points,) if he is earnestly desiring to save his soul, is certainly improper, if not positively sinful. Is the man in his principles a Baptist, or is he an Independent? Is he a Calvinist, or is he an Arminian? Is he in politics a tory, whig, or radical? It matters not, and we care not. If he really "desires to flee from the wrath to come, and be saved from his sins," we gladly receive him. We cheerfully throw open the door of Methodism for his reception. We have, of course, fixed principles, both in doctrine and discipline, and we will not, cannot, sacrifice or alter them; but if he will enjoy our manifold privileges in peace, not disturbing us with his peculiar opinions, then he may be with us. We ask not for opinions. We consider the heart. "Is thy heart right with my heart, as my heart is with thy heart? Then give me thy hand. Come with us, and we will do thee good.

Though Mr. Wesley made the door of admission so wide, his discipline was rigid, and almost severe. He expelled from his society great numbers of persons for what we generally consider very trivial offences. It would be absurd to say that he expelled them from the Church of England. He dismissed them as not being fit and proper persons to meet with his own people. Mr. Wesley, let it be observed, dismissed them on his *sole* authority. He was the father and founder, and he was also the *ruler* of the society. He gave the society existence, and he had a right to give

it was. He had the reins and whip in his own hands. No leaders' meeting checked him, and from his decision there was no appeal.

The Methodist society grew on, and the members multiplied exceedingly. Sinners of all kinds and in all places were converted in abundance, under the powerful preaching of Mr. Wesley and his brother Charles, and were regularly joined together in religious societies. Thus the work of God, "*Methodism so-called*," progressed with the most wonderful rapidity.

But all was not sunshine and gladness. Such unexampled success provoked the jealousy of the clergy, and such strange proceedings created general alarm. Persecution of every kind was, therefore, carried on against the poor Methodists, with the greatest vigour and perseverance. Violent invectives; coarse libels; malicious slanders; haughty sneers; riotous mobs; brutal outrages upon their persons, property, and dwellings;—these convey but a faint impression of the violent and disgraceful persecutions, insults, and injuries, which "*the people called Methodists*" had to endure. And what rendered such shameful proceedings against these poor and pious people the more formidable was, that in many cases, a clergyman would raise and direct the riotous mobs, and the magistrates would not convict the rioters. Christopher Hopper, when alluding to the persecutions of the early Methodists, says, that "*Laymen and ecclesiastics joined hand in hand to suppress these pestilent fellows; not with acts of kindness, scripture, or reason; but invectives*

and lies, dirt, rotten eggs, brick-bats, stones, and cudgels; these were satan's arguments in vindication of his own cause. It was the common cry in town and country, "Press them for soldiers; send them on board a man-of-war; transport them; beat them; stone them; send them to prison, or knock out their brains and despatch at once; for there is no law for them." Such was the *merciful* treatment received by these devoted people at the hands of their brother Englishmen, protestants, and christians so called, in the middle of the eighteenth century.

The Methodists were frequently represented as enthusiasts and fanatics. No doubt the extraordinary results which followed Mr Wesley's preaching, such as groaning, crying aloud, falling down as if dead, &c., caused these representations to have a more general currency. But nothing could be more false. When the Holy Spirit works powerfully upon the mind of man, and he sees himself ready to be swallowed up in endless misery, it is impossible to restrain his intense feelings, and regulate his conduct according to the rules of etiquette and decorum. But who would pronounce this fanaticism? Allowing, however, that in some cases it might be fanaticism, or might degenerate into it, what does this prove? It proves nothing. All did not groan; all did not cry aloud; all did not fall down as if dead; all did not leap over the bounds of decency and order. But if earnestness and zeal in the cause of God be fanaticism, then it must be acknowledged, that the whole race of Methodists

were genuine fanatics. And may they always continue thus fanatical! May such a spirit of fanaticism ever rest upon them! But we cannot help being surprised at the moral effects of it. Drunkards became sober, and swearers swore no more. Licentiousness was succeeded by holiness, and vice by virtue. Strange fanaticism! It was said that the apostles were drunk with wine on the day of Pentecost, because they spoke in various languages unto the people who had assembled together. Modern fanaticism, however, equals in its effects, if it does not surpass, this ancient wine. The one taught languages, the other virtue.

Many other things were foolishly and falsely charged upon the early Methodists, but, strong in their own integrity, and conscious of the righteousness of their cause, they bore the reproaches, insults, and injuries of their enemies with meekness and constancy, trusting in their God.

CHAPTER VI.—*From the rise of the Methodist Society, till the first Methodist Conference.*

1740. In the beginning of this year, it is believed, Mr. Wesley first received regular assistance from a lay-preacher. Having to leave London for a season, he appointed a young man, named Thomas

Maxfield, who was remarkable for piety, earnestness, and a knowledge of the scriptures, to read and pray with the society during his own absence from London. But zealous Thomas, instead of confining himself merely to reading and praying, or, at most, to advising, commenced *preaching*. Mr. Wesley soon heard of it, and being shocked at this violation of church order, as he then considered it, he hastened up to London to stop such a serious irregularity. When he arrived, he said abruptly to his mother, who then lived at the house adjoining the Foundry, "Thomas Maxfield has turned *preacher* I find." "John" seriously replied the venerable woman, "you know what my sentiments have been. You cannot suspect me of favouring anything of this kind. But take care what you do with respect to that young man; for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear also yourself." He wisely took the advice of his honoured mother; his stubborn prejudices in favour of rigid high-churchism gave way before the force of truth, and he submitted to what clearly appeared to be the will and order of God. Thomas Maxfield was therefore the first lay-preacher; Thomas Richard was the second, and Thomas Westall the third. "These severally desired" says Mr. Wesley, "to serve me as sons, and to labour when and where I should direct."

Mr. Wesley's defence of himself in thus allowing and employing persons to preach who had not received episcopal ordination, is a complete, and even triumphant justification of his conduct. No

man could refute his reasons. They are unanswered and unanswerable. The circumstances in which he was placed were very peculiar and pressing. Consider them for a moment. He and his brother Charles, had preached in various parts of the country, generally in private houses, or in the open air; the churches, with but very few exceptions, being closed against them. God had graciously given them a large measure of success, many sinners having been turned from the error of their ways. These men, now anxiously desiring to devote themselves wholly to God, attended the means of grace with persevering regularity, and everywhere, and at all times, conducted themselves with remarkable propriety and seriousness. They were consequently derided as Methodist fanatics,—abused, insulted, ridiculed, and ignominiously driven by their godly pastors from the table of the Lord. Thus the clergy, who ought to have taken these poor people by the hand, and have gently led them on in the paths of peace and virtue, used all their influence to destroy what good had already been done in them. Here then was a case of imperative necessity. A great work has begun;—sinners in abundance are converted to God; spiritual consolation, instruction, and advice, must be provided; the clergy, the appointed teachers and pastors of the people, refuse co-operation; they refuse to take these souls under their care, and even commence a system of furious persecution. What then can be done? Souls are perishing! and must they be quietly allowed to perish? Must the whole work of God be allowed

to crumble into nothing? No! Whatever may be the requirements of church order, it cannot be allowed. A class of men are, therefore, brought into existence to meet the emergency. They have not had the hands of the Bishop upon their heads, but they are sensible, well-instructed, earnest, and holy men, and are thus fully qualified to *help* and *assist* Mr. Wesley in carrying on the work of God. A regular system of itinerancy therefore gradually arose. Preachers greatly multiplied, and their labours being most wonderfully successful, societies of loving and devoted people sprang up, increased, and spread in every part of the kingdom.

On July 20th, Mr. Wesley, on account of certain false and dangerous doctrines which had crept into the society which met in Fetter Lane, finally separated from it, as did eighteen or nineteen others. From this period he regularly met his own society at the Foundry, but none elsewhere, being now entirely disengaged from all other private societies whatever.

In the latter end of the year 1740, Mr. Wesley published a sermon on Free Grace, in which he rather strongly attacked the doctrine of Absolute Predestination. A copy of this sermon was sent over to America, where Mr. Whitfield was then labouring, and having a short time before embraced the doctrine of the Decrees, he was offended at Mr. Wesley, and wrote a professed reply. Mr. Whitfield soon afterwards returned to England, and Mr. Wesley, hearing of his unkind behaviour, went to him, and had an interview with him. "I

much approved" says he "of his plainness of speech." The points of dispute were three: 1st. Unconditional election. 2nd. Irresistible grace, and 3rd. Final perseverance.

Before this unhappy period these two great preachers of the age had laboured together in perfect harmony; but in consequence of some injudicious remarks in Mr. Whitfield's weak and inconclusive reply, and the tenacity with which he clung to his peculiar opinions, the harmony which had hitherto subsisted between himself and Mr. Wesley, was not only interrupted, but a breach was made which appeared irreparable. From this time, therefore, they laboured quite independent of each other. Happily, however, as we shall see, these great and good men were so far reconciled in the beginning of the year 1750, that they preached in each other's chapels. They differed in judgment, but were one in heart. Thus they continued till Mr. Whitfield's death, who, in his will, written with his own hand, says, "I leave a mourning-ring to my honoured and disinterested fellow-labourers, the Rev. Messrs. John and Charles Wesley, in token of my indissoluble union with them in heart and christian affection, notwithstanding our difference in judgment about some particular points of doctrine;" and Mr. Wesley, according to Mr. Whitfield's own desire, preached his funeral sermon at the Tabernacle in Moorfields.

It was a common report about this time that Mr. Wesley was a Papist and a Jesuit. That he kept two Popish priests in his house; that he had large remittances from Spain in order to

make a party among the poor ; and that, as soon as the Spaniards landed, he was to join them with twenty thousand men ;—were some of the most absurd stories circulated concerning him. But though “all manner of evil was said against him falsely,” and had been for years, he bore it with patience. “That men revile,” says he, “and say all manner of evil against me ; that I am become, as it were, a monster unto many ; that the zealous of almost every denomination cry out, ‘away with such a fellow from the earth ;’ this gives me, with regard to myself, no degree of uneasiness.”

1741. On September 3rd, of this year, Mr. Wesley had a long conversation with Count Zinzendorf, the *Pope* of the Moravians. He has preserved the substance of it in Latin in his *Journal*, but Moore has translated it in his life of Mr. Wesley. The discussion was doctrinal. Mr. Stonehouse, a clergyman, after reading it, said, “The Count is a clever fellow, but the genius of Methodism is too strong for him.”

In the latter end of this year the poor Methodists had to suffer much from the tumultuous and furious populace in London and Middlesex ; but the king, George the Second, hearing of these persecutions, declared that “no man in his dominions should be persecuted on the account of religion while he sat on the throne.” Perhaps it was in consequence of this noble determination that, on December 31st, Sir John Ganson, called upon Mr. Wesley in London, and said to him, “Sir, you have no need to suffer these riotous mobs to molest you, as they have done long. I,

and all the Middlesex magistrates *have orders from above* to do you justice whenever you apply to us." Soon afterwards application was made, justice was done, and thenceforward the Methodists had peace in London.

1742. In the beginning of this year, the societies, which had abundantly increased, were divided into *classes*. Mr. Wesley thus relates the commencement of this important institution. On February 15th, "many were met together at Bristol to consult concerning a proper method of paying the public debt contracted by building, and it was agreed,—1st. That every member of this society that was able should contribute one penny a week. 2nd. That the whole society should be divided into little companies or classes, about twelve in each class. 2nd. That one person in each should receive the contribution of the rest, and bring it to the stewards weekly. Thus began that excellent institution merely upon a temporal account, from which we reaped so many spiritual blessings that we soon fixed the same rule in all our societies." In March, Mr. Wesley introduced the same system into the London society.

About this time he likewise instituted the select society, or band, for the benefit of those persons who enjoyed a larger measure of grace than the rest of the brethren, and were pressing forward to the attainment of the full image of God.

The visitation of classes, once a quarter, by the preachers, was also begun this year. Thus every

person in all the classes throughout the society, came under the direct personal notice and examination of a preacher, four times in a year; and a ticket with a verse of scripture upon it was given to each member at every visitation, as a mark of approval, and as a token of continued membership. This excellent practice commenced in London, but it soon became general, and has remained a part of our economy ever since.

On April 9th, the first *watch-night* was held in London. The custom was begun by the Kingswood colliers, who, instead of spending the Saturday night as they once did, in cursing, swearing, and drinking, spent it in praying to God, and singing his praises. Mr. Wesley heard of it, and ordered it to be held once a month, at the time of the full moon,—then once a quarter,—and recommended it for the adoption of all his societies.

In May, Mr. Wesley visited Birstal, in Yorkshire, where he met with John Nelson, a lay-preacher of uncommon strength of understanding, wit, and usefulness. He gave Mr. Wesley a detailed account of his doings and successes, which seems to have much pleased him. The Journal of honest John Nelson has been extensively read in the Methodist Societies, and is universally admired for its interesting simplicity.

On July 23rd, Mrs. Susannah Wesley, (Mr. Wesley's mother) died at the house adjoining the Foundry, London. She was the youngest, and last surviving daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley. It is impossible to do justice to the

character of this venerable, talented, and holy woman. "I have been acquainted, says Dr. Adam Clarke, "with many pious females, I have read the lives of several others, and composed memoirs of a few ; but such a woman, take her for all in all, I have not heard of, I have not read of, nor with her equal have I been acquainted. Such an one, Solomon has described in the last chapter of his Proverbs ; and to her I can apply the summed-up character of his accomplished housewife, 'Many daughters have done virtuously,' but Susannah Wesley 'has excelled them all !'"

1743. On May 1st, the Rules, &c. of the societies were drawn up by Mr. Wesley, and published under the following title: "The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies in London, Bristol, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, &c." The rise of the United or Methodist Society is herein explained, the business of a leader is defined, and rules are laid down for the regulation of the conduct of the members. This important document went through twenty-two editions before Mr. Wesley's death.

On August 26th, Mr. Wesley set out for Cornwall, Mr. Charles Wesley and two preachers having been there before. Methodism has made rapid progress in this county, for the Cornish people love "Christianity in earnest."

On October 20th, a furious mob collected at Wednesbury, but Mr. Wesley was most wonderfully preserved from any material injury, though

he was in the hands of the infuriated "beasts of the people" for a considerable time. They carried him before two Justices of the Peace, who both pretended to be in bed! These same Justices—Lane and Persehouse—within a few days of this brutal riot, issued a warrant to all high constables, petty constables, &c., stating that "*several disorderly persons, styling themselves Methodist preachers, go about raising routs and riots to the great damage of his Majesty's liege people, and against the peace of our Sovereign Lord the King;*" and commanding these high constables, petty constables, &c., to "make diligent search after the said Methodist preachers, and to bring him or them before some of us, his said Majesty's Justices of the Peace, to be examined concerning their unlawful doings." When a Methodist preacher *was* captured and brought to them, these valiant Justices certainly acted most inconsistently in going to bed. Mr. Wesley calls this "warrant" "as great a curiosity in its kind as, he believed, was ever yet seen in England." It is indeed a precious specimen of enlightened liberality.

In the latter end of the year 1743, Mr. Wesley, who was always multiplying beneficial agencies, appointed *visitors of the sick*.

Here then we see an earnest, and rapidly increasing society, in full and harmonious operation. The *members* are wisely divided into little companies called classes, each of which has a *leader*, who gives direction in difficulty, and consolation in distress, to those, under his care; and

also receives their contributions. *Stewards* are appointed to manage the finances; and other persons are engaged as *visitors of the sick*. A number of earnest and devoted *lay-preachers* constantly travelling round the country, overlook the members of the society, and the operations of the various office-bearers; and finally, there is Mr. Wesley, who, as the father and ruler of all, guides and directs all subordinate agencies, and changes or consolidates any part of the widely expanding system, as it appears necessary or desirable; thus superintending, with matchless wisdom, the whole work of God.

CHAPTER VII.—*From the first Conference in 1744,
till the year 1750.*

1744. The strange revival of the work of God called Methodism, having become, by this time, very extensive and important, Mr. Wesley, who had, as we have observed, the superintendence and control of the whole work, considered it advisable to invite some clergymen who were favourable to him, and also some of his own preachers, to meet him in London, that he might *confer* with them concerning the present state of this great and holy cause, and lay out plans for future usefulness.

The first Methodist Conference commenced its sittings in London on June 25th. Besides Mr. Wesley and his brother Charles, there were present four clergymen of the Established Church, viz: John Hodges, Rector of Wenvo; Henry Piers, Vicar of Bexley; Samuel Taylor, Vicar of Quinton, and John Meriton. Likewise four of Mr. Wesley's own preachers, viz: Thomas Maxfield, John Downs, Thomas Richards, and John Bennett. Mr. Wesley himself, of course, presided. "It is desired" says he in his introduction, "that all things be considered as in the immediate presence of God; that we may meet with a single eye, and as little children who have everything to learn; that every point which is proposed may be examined to the foundation; that every person may speak freely whatever is in his heart; and that every question which may arise, should be thoroughly debated and settled."

On the first day, certain preliminaries were settled, and the doctrine of Justification discussed. On the second day they considered Sanctification. On the third, the Established Church, and their relation to it. On the fourth, certain points of discipline; and on the fifth day, Friday, the various meetings of the society were defined, and the officers described.

The subjects discussed were proposed in the form of questions; the decisions being put as answers. This plan was pursued by Mr. Wesley in all succeeding Conferences, and it has continued to the present time. These discussions, or rather *results* of discussions, were published by Mr.

Wesley, with this title, "Minutes of several conversations between the Reverend Mr. Wesley and others," but he did not annually publish them till the year 1765. They are commonly called "The Minutes of Conference."

At this first Conference it was asked, "What officers belong to these societies?" Answer. "The ministers, (i. e. clergymen) assistants, helpers, stewards, leaders of bands, leaders of classes, visitors of the sick, school-masters, and house-keepers." The *ministers* were clergymen of the Established Church; the *assistants* were lay-preachers who *assisted* Mr. Wesley in superintending the societies; the *helpers* had little, or nothing to do with the government of the people, but devoted themselves to preaching the gospel, and *helping* the assistants to expand, enlarge, and strengthen the cause of God; the *stewards* managed the finances; the *leaders* of bands and classes gave spiritual advice, consolation, or reproof, as occasion required, to those placed under their care; the *visitors of the sick* saw every sick person in this district three times a week, and did for them all that it was possible to do, either for their temporal or spiritual advantage; the *school-masters* managed the schools; and the *house-keepers* were generally pious old women, who kept in order the houses which Mr. Wesley built in various parts of the country.

Without giving any other particular quotations from the "Minutes," it may be observed in general, that this first Conference laid the groundwork of all succeeding Conferences. 1st. It

discussed and settled certain points of doctrine. 2nd. It considered the general position of the societies, and decided that the great work of saving souls was of paramount importance, before which, mere prudential considerations must give way. 3rd. It laid down some disciplinary regulations, and described the various meetings, offices, and office-bearers, connected with the societies. And 4th. It gave directions to the preachers, both assistants and helpers, not only with regard to their general deportment, but also, as to what part of the kingdom they were to labour during the forthcoming year. Mr. Wesley thus notices this Conference in his Journal ;—" Monday, 25th, (of June, 1741,) and the five following days we spent in *conference* with many of our brethren (come from several parts) who desire nothing but to save their own souls, and those that hear them. And surely, as long as they continue thus minded, their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

In the former part of this year Mr. Wesley published "An earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion :"—a powerfully written pamphlet, wherein he explains the nature of the religion he taught, and defends his manner of teaching it. On December 22nd, he finished writing the first part of "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion." The second and third parts of the same work appeared in the following year. No unprejudiced man can seriously peruse these "Appeals" without adopting the language which

Dr. Doddridge employed respecting them, "How forcible are right words!"

On August 24th, Mr. Wesley preached for the last time before the University of Oxford. The sermon was upon scriptural christianity; and the faithfulness of the application gave great offence. "I am now," says he, "clear of the blood of these men. I have fully delivered my own soul." The Vice Chancellor soon after sent for his notes; with which request Mr. Wesley gladly complied; and thus they came to be read by all the eminent men in the University. The sermon was afterwards published in a separate pamphlet, accompanied by the following address, "To the reader;"—"It was not my design, when I wrote, ever to print the latter part of the following sermon; but the false and scurrilous accounts of it which have been published, almost in every corner of the nation, constrain me to publish the whole, just as it was preached; that men of reason may judge for themselves."

1745. In this year the Rev. William Grimshaw, Vicar of Haworth, in Yorkshire, a warm-hearted, holy, and laborious man, became closely united to the Methodists; and he continued thus united till the time of his death. He even acted as Mr. Wesley's assistant in the Haworth Circuit, for several years, and that Circuit was, commonly known as *Grimshaw's round*. He only wrote once for the public, and then his pen was employed in defence of the Methodists. This production was a pamphlet exposing the misrepresentations of George White, a persecuting

and unprincipled clergyman, who received a most tremendous flagellation at the hands of the somewhat rough, though dexterous Grimshaw.

On August 1st, the second Methodist Conference was begun at Bristol. "Thursday, August 1st," says Mr. Wesley, "and the following days, we had our second conference, with as many of our brethren that labour in the word as could be present." There was only one clergyman, besides Mr. Wesley and his brother Charles, at this Conference, but there were seven of Mr. Wesley's own preachers. The conversations were chiefly doctrinal: justification and sanctification occupying a great part of their attention.

It was about this time that Count Zinzendorf, the Moravian leader, published an advertisement in which he declared that he, and his people, had no connexion with Messrs. John and Charles Wesley; adding in the spirit of prophecy, that they would "soon run their heads against the wall." "We will not," drily retorts Mr. Wesley, "if we can help it."

On September 28th, Mr. Wesley wrote the first of a series of letters, chiefly relating to some peculiar points of doctrine to a learned and ingenious individual calling himself *John Smith*, but who was in all probability no other than Dr. Thomas Secker, at that time Bishop of Oxford, and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. Another letter followed in January, 1746, another in June of the same year, another in March, 1747, another in July, and another—the last of the series—in March, 1748; making six letters in

all. "John Smith" showed considerable cleverness and tact in his replies to these powerful letters of Mr. Wesley, and indeed the whole controversy was conducted not only with general good temper, but with much ability on both sides.

1746. The discipline which Mr. Wesley exercised over his societies was most rigorous. Many cases occur in his Journal where he expelled a number of persons together, because their lives did not exactly correspond with their profession. An instance of this kind occurs in his Journal for March of this year. "Friday, 21st," says he, "I came to Nottingham. I had long doubted what it was which hindered the work of God here. But upon inquiry the cause was plain. So many of the society were either triflers or disorderly walkers, that the blessing of God could not rest upon them; so *I made short work, cutting off all such at a stroke!* and leaving only that little handful, who, as (far as could be judged) were really in earnest to save their souls.'

On May 13th, the third Methodist Conference was begun at Bristol. Mr. Wesley, his brother Charles, two other clergymen, and four travelling preachers, were present. Some doctrinal points were considered, as they usually were at the early Conferences. Mr. Wesley drew up an account of Kingswood School which the assistants were required annually to read to every society, in order to make the Methodists sensible of the excellence of the Institution; and a collection was directed to be made for its support, once a year, in every preaching-house throughout the

kingdom. Mr. Wesley considered it "one of the noblest charities in the world."

At this Conference it was asked, "How many circuits are there? Answer. "Seven. 1. London; which included Surrey and Kent. 2. Bristol; which included Somersetshire, Portland, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, and Gloucestershire. 3. Cornwall. 4. Evesham; which included Shrewsbury, Leominster, Hereford, Stroud, and Wednesbury. 5. York; which included Yorkshire, Cheshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Lincolnshire. 6. Newcastle. 7. Wales."

This is the first time circuits are mentioned. Their vast extent rendered continual travelling absolutely necessary. To be a methodist preacher was no small and easy matter. It required men of ardent piety, strong sense, unwearied energy, and unconquerable perseverance. Such indeed were the early Methodist preachers. Their labours in preaching, praying, and travelling, were astonishing, and almost incredible. When any young men offered themselves to Mr. Wesley to serve him in the work, he used to say, "You must expect no wealth; no honour; but great labour, and great reproach."

On December 5th, Mr. Wesley commenced the practice of giving physic to the poor. About thirty came on this, the first day, and in "three weeks," he tells us, "about three hundred." He continued the good work for several years, but the patients became so numerous, and the consequent expense so great, that he was obliged to

discontinue it. Large numbers of the sick-poor were restored to perfect health, and some of the cases effected were of a most extraordinary nature.

1747. Though Mr. Wesley was constantly preaching and travelling, he found time to write a considerable number of tracts and pamphlets. Previous to this year he wrote a reply to the Rev. Mr. Church's *Strictures upon his Journal*; "Advice to the People called Methodists;" and a second reply to Mr. Church entitled, "The principles of a Methodist further Explained." In 1746, he likewise published the first volume of the *Sermons* which are mentioned in the Poll Deed. Another volume followed in 1748; a third in 1750; and a fourth was added in 1760. He also wrote several small tracts against common sins, which his preachers distributed gratuitously. Before, or in this year, (1747.) he wrote *A Word to a Smuggler, to a Sabbath-breaker, to a Swearer, to a Drunkard, to an Unhappy Woman, to a Condemned Malefactor, to an Englishman, to a Soldier, to a Protestant, and to a Freeholder.*

On June 16th, the fourth Methodist Conference began in the Foundry, London. Four or five clergymen, and eleven lay-preachers attended. Doctrinal points were the chief topics of conversation. At this period there were twenty-two assistants, or superintendents, and thirty-nine local preachers. "Monday, the 15th," says Mr. Wesley in his *Journal*, "our Conference began, and ended on Saturday, 20th. The Minutes of all passed therein were some time after transcribed and

published." Mr. Wesley says, the Conference began on "Monday," the 15th, but the probability is that it was not *formally* opened until the following day.

In August, Mr. Wesley paid his first visit to Ireland, Mr. Williams, one of his preachers, had gone over some time before, and had collected a society. Mr. Wesley continued to visit that country every two or three years during his life, and generally took a tour through the land.

1748. On February 27th, Mr. Wesley, being in Wales, wrote "A Word to a Methodist," advising the Methodists there, not to leave the Church, nor rail at its ministers. The tract was immediately translated into Welsh, and printed.

On June 22nd, the fifth Methodist Conference began in Bristol. Seventeen preachers were present. From this period till the year 1763, the "Minutes" were not published.

On June 24th, Mr. Wesley opened the large school at Kingswood. There had been a school here for several years, originally erected with the design of educating the children of the colliers; but the present one was chiefly intended for the education of the sons of the preachers. Kingswood school afterwards became a celebrated institution in Methodism. A collection was at this time annually made throughout the connexion for its support.

1749. In this year, Mr. Wesley began to compile (notwithstanding his unparalleled labours in preaching and travelling) his "Christian Library." He published the work in fifty

volumes, with this title, "A Christian Library; consisting of extracts from, and abridgments of, the choicest pieces of practical divinity, which have been published in the English tongue." In the year 1752, he remarked of this excellent, and truly "*Christian Library*;" that it was a work by which he had lost above two hundred pounds. "Perhaps," he adds, "the next generation may know the value of it."

On August 20th, the sixth Methodist Conference began in London.

Mr. Wesley was at this time much attached to a pious and intelligent woman of the name of Murray, and would doubtless have married her, had not his brother Charles, who had himself married some months before, from some strange motive, most unwarrantably interfered, and with Mr. Whitfield's assistance, succeeded in procuring her marriage with John Bennett, one of Mr. Wesley's preachers. This unpleasant, and not altogether honourable, transaction, very nearly produced a serious disagreement and rupture between the two brothers; but the heart of John Wesley could not cherish feelings of resentment, and the affair was, therefore, quickly passed over, and buried in oblivion.

Mr. Wesley now beheld the grain of mustard-seed which he had sown, spring up, grow, and luxuriate abundantly. Pure and undefiled religion spread on every hand. The societies which he had planted, increased and grew with great rapidity; but they did not increase in wild luxuriance, and grow in ungovernable profusion.

They were all kept in regular order, and were subjected to a rigorous culture. Mr. Wesley was continually travelling through the land, visiting the societies, and, in the exercise of his paternal authority settling all disputes, and redressing all grievances. His *wisdom* and *judgment* were thus required to be fully and constantly exercised ; his *piety*, his *energy*, his *ever-burning zeal*, were necessary to support him under his arduous duties, and to carry him through the numerous difficulties which he had to encounter. But it may be observed—the arrangements of his societies had become so matured and complete that his *love of order* was abundantly gratified.

CHAPTER VIII.—*From the year 1750, till 1760.*

1750. In January of this year, Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitfield, who had been for several years separated from each other, because of the difference of opinion between them upon the subject of predestination, were again so far reconciled, that they preached in each other's chapels. This reconciliation gave both Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitfield great satisfaction, and these two great men ever afterwards "*agreed to differ.*"

On February 1st, Mr. Wesley finished his first letter to Bishop Lavington, in answer to

the Bishop's pamphlet, entitled, "The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared." Another letter followed. The Bishop was virulent in the extreme, but he had an opponent who well knew how to treat him. It had been said of the violent prelate, that,

"He proved, and proved, and proved at last;—
"When Wesley held the Proteus fast,—
"That christianity alone exists,
"In Papists, and in Methodists."

In February, also, a great persecution, which began in the preceding year in Ireland, against the poor Methodists, raged with increased, and increasing violence. A ballad-singer named Butler, was the ringleader of the riotous mobs, and he was secretly encouraged by the magistrates. "Five pounds for a *swaddler's* head," shouted the enraged populace;—the Methodists being commonly called *swaddlers* in Ireland. This name was first given to Mr. Cennick, by a Popish priest, on his preaching from "Ye shall find the babe wrapped in *swaddling* clothes, &c." The conduct of these furious Irish mobs was outrageous in the extreme. We are told that "They entered the place of their (the Methodists) assembly, pulled down the preacher, demolished the pulpit, burnt the seats, fell upon men, women, and children, with swords and clubs, and committed other acts of violence too shocking to name." Justice was sought from the authorities, but it was sought in vain. Even the grand jury

refused to find a *true bill* against any of the rioters, and, on the contrary, made a most amiable presentment which deserves to be kept in everlasting remembrance. "We find and present, Charles Wesley, Thomas Williams, Robert Swindells," and eight others, "*as persons of ill-fame, vagabonds, and common disturbers of his Majesty's peace, and pray that they may be transported!*" What a *loving* prayer! Though it was doubtless *sincere*, it was not answered; for the judge having called before him the persons *presented* by this enlightened grand jury, he said unto them, "Gentlemen, there is no evidence against you; you may retire; I am very sorry you have been treated so very improperly; I hope the police of this city will be better attended to for the time to come." They were all Methodist preachers, excepting one; and being thus honourably liberated, the preachers were ever afterwards treated with respect in the city of Cork. Mr. Wesley, when alluding to the amiable *finding* of the grand jury, ironically observed, "This memorable presentment is worthy to be preserved in the annals of Ireland to all succeeding generations."

On March 8th, the seventh Conference began at Bristol. "Thursday, 8th," says Mr. Wesley in his Journal, "I desired all the preachers that were in Bristol to meet me at four in the afternoon, and so every day while I was in town."

On August 25th, Mr. John Jane, one of the travelling preachers, died. "All his clothes linen and woollen, stockings, hat, and wig,

were not thought sufficient to answer his funeral expenses, which amounted to one pound, seventeen shillings, and three pence. All the money he had was one shilling and four pence. "Enough," says Mr. Wesley, "for any unmarried preacher of the gospel to leave to his executors."

1751. Mr. Wesley being convinced that he might be more holy and useful if married, than if he continued single; in the month of February of this year, he took to wife a widow named Vizelle, who had two children, and considerable property. That she was a pious and intelligent woman at the time of her marriage, cannot be reasonably doubted; but the union was nevertheless, an unfortunate and unhappy one. Mr. Wesley travelled and preached as much as ever, but she wanted him to give up, at least in a great measure, such an extensive system of laborious itinerancy. He however, could not, and would not, yield to her importunity, and domestic uneasiness quickly followed. Her spirit, at length, became torn with a furious jealousy, and she was led into many excesses. She frequently left his house, but after much entreaty, returned again. Having thus disquieted him for about twenty years, she seized some of his papers and departed, leaving word that she should never return. He coolly observed when he knew of her final departure, "I did not forsake her; I did not dismiss her; I will not recal her." She died in the year 1781, and was buried in Camberwell Church Yard, near London. A stone is

placed at the head of her grave whereon she is represented as "a woman of exemplary piety, a tender parent, and a sincere friend." She left her fortune, amounting to about £5000, to a Mr. Vizelle, her son;—to Mr. Wesley she bequeathed a ring.

On March 11th, the eighth Conference began at Bristol. Mr. Wesley was afraid that some of the preachers were "perverted from the simplicity of the gospel," and "expected to have heard many objections to their first doctrines." But he was pleasingly disappointed, for he found them "all of one mind, as well as one heart."

In April, Mr. Wesley, accompanied by Christopher Hopper, (one of his preachers) went on a visit to Scotland. He says, they met with more success than they expected. This was the commencement of Methodism in that country, but it has never flourished there.

On June 1st, Mr. Wesley resigned his Fellowship. The following is a translation of his elegant Latin resignation. "I, John Wesley, Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, do hereby spontaneously and freely resign whatever rights I possess in the aforesaid society, to the Rector, and Fellows of the same; wishing to all, and each of them, perpetual peace, and every species of felicity in Christ."

In this year, it may be observed, first arose the disputes concerning separation from the National Church. Though Mr. Wesley exerted all his influence to prevent the continuance of the

agitation of this question, it was never perfectly quiet afterwards.

In June, because of the shocking conduct of Mr. James Wheatley, one of the preachers, Mr. Wesley suspended him from either preaching or practising physic, until the next Conference. A paper was given him, signed by Mr. Wesley and his brother Charles, stating the decision, and the reasons for it. This shameless and immoral man was, it is believed, the first preacher expelled from the connexion.

On December 26th, Mr. John Bennett, another of Mr. Wesley's preachers, who joined him in the year 1743, and had been very useful in Derbyshire and elsewhere,—separated himself from the society. He accused Mr. Wesley of various things; his accusations being four in number. He seriously alleged of Mr. Wesley, 1st. That he was a Pope. 2nd. That he preached Popery. 3rd. That he denied the perseverance of the saints. And 4th. That he taught sinless perfection. The first is a foolish blunder; the second a palpable falsehood; the third (in one sense) an undeniable truth; and the fourth, a gross misrepresentation. These four very serious charges, as brother Bennett doubtless considered them, are of course, of no importance, excepting to show the disordered state of his own understanding. Much harm, was, however, done for a season by this individual; but after the disturbance had passed over, the societies rapidly increased.

1752. On August 14th and 15th, the first

Irish Conference was held at Limerick. Mr. Wesley and nine preachers attended it. They considered and settled questions respecting doctrines, discipline, behaviour, and appointments. Conferences were frequently held by him in Ireland afterwards.

On October 16th, the ninth Methodist Conference began in Bristol. It was agreed that the preachers should receive twelve pounds per annum, to provide themselves with clothes, books, and other necessities. Previous to this time, the stewards supplied them with what they wanted, or at least, they ought to have done so. This plan required alteration, for it was the parent of favouritism. The new regulation was a great improvement; and though the stipend was but small, it increased the comfort and independence of the preachers where it was paid to them. It was, however, several years before the new plan was universally adopted.

1753. On May 22nd, the tenth Conference began at Leeds. This was the first held in that town; all the former Conferences having been held either at London or Bristol. Nearly all the preachers (about thirty in number) were present, and Mr. Wesley speaks of it as being a very happy season. "Tuesday, 22nd, most of our preachers met," says he in his Journal, "and conversed freely together; as we did morning and afternoon, to the end of the week, when our Conference ended with the same blessing as it began; God giving us all to be not only of one heart, but of one judgment,"

Mr. Wesley had hitherto enjoyed an almost uninterrupted course of good health, but in October of this year he was attacked by a consumptive disorder, which threatened to be fatal. After trying various other means in vain, he went to the Hot Wells, near Bristol, to have the benefit of those medicinal springs. Being thus unable to travel and preach as usual, he employed his time in writing "Notes on the New Testament," which were afterwards published. In the midst of his severe affliction he received a very cheering, though, as was supposed, a farewell letter, from his "most affectionate, sympathising, and afflicted younger brother, in the gospel of *their* common Lord," Mr. George Whitfield.

Mr. Wesley, calculating on an early dissolution, and anxious to prevent "vile panegyric," wrote the following epitaph for himself:—

HERE LIETH

THE BODY OF JOHN WESLEY,

A BRAND PLUCKED OUT OF THE BURNING,
WHO DIED OF A CONSUMPTION, IN THE FIFTY-FIRST

YEAR OF HIS AGE,

NOT LEAVING, AFTER HIS DEBTS ARE PAID,

TEN POUNDS BEHIND HIM,

PRAYING,

God be merciful to me an unprofitable servant!

He ordered that this, if any, inscription should be placed on his tomb stone.

The fears of Mr. Wesley's friends were, however, happily not realized ; for after he had spent about four months in this retreat, he was so far restored, that he was enabled to return to his laborious duties.

1754. On May 22nd, the eleventh Conference began in London. Since the last Conference five of the chief preachers had abandoned the itinerancy, and become preachers to independent congregations. "Wednesday, 22nd, Our Conference began," says Mr. Wesley, "and the spirit of peace and love was in the midst of us. Before we parted, we all willingly signed an agreement, not to act independently of each other ; so that the breach lately made has only united us more closely together than ever." This was the first agreement or declaration signed by Methodist preachers. It was repeatedly done afterwards, and was attended with the most beneficial results.

1755. On May 6th, the twelfth Conference commenced at Leeds. The chief topic of discussion was, whether it was lawful or expedient for them to separate from the Established Church. After two or three days had been spent in seriously considering the subject, they all fully agreed that, "whether it was *lawful* or not, it was no ways *expedient*."

In August of this year, Mr. Wesley began a practice which he continued till the end of his life, viz. a public renewal of the covenant with God. It afterwards became usual to renew the covenant on the first sabbath in every new year,

and no other of our services is so eminently distinguished for deep solemnity, and elevated devotion.

1756. On August 26th, the thirteenth Conference began at Bristol. About fifty preachers were present. The regulations of the society were carefully considered, and all of them approved. The much-vexed question of separation from the Establishment was likewise again considered; and Mr. Wesley closed the Conference with a solemn declaration, with which all the preachers present concurred, of his intention never to separate from the Church.

The chapel debt of the Connexion was at this time nearly £4000.

1757. On August 4th, the fourteenth Conference began in London. "From the first hour to the last," says Mr. Wesley, "there was no jarring string, but all was harmony and love." Mr. Alexander Mather, though married, was received as a travelling preacher. He was the first preacher received into the itinerancy as a married man. It was agreed that Mrs. Mather should have four shillings per week allowed her. A mighty sum truly! But she was the first preacher's wife who had any fixed allowance at all.

In this year Mr. Charles Wesley ceased to travel, and settled down at Bristol; but Mr. Wesley continued to travel as much, and preach as often, as ever.

On August 17th, Mr. Wesley finished writing an answer to Dr. Taylor upon original sin. He entitled it, "The Doctrine of Original Sin, ac-

tording to Scripture, Reason, and Experience." It is one of the most elaborate and masterly of Mr. Wesley's productions. The Doctor could never be persuaded to write a reply.

In the middle of December Mr. Wesley wrote "A Preservative against unsettled notions in Religion," "designed," as he says, "for the use of all those who were under his care, but chiefly of the young preachers."

1758. On May 2nd, Mr. Wesley answered Dr. Free. "Tuesday, 2nd,—I wrote," says he, in his Journal, "a short answer to Dr. Free's weak, bitter, scurrilous invective against the people called Methodists. But I doubt whether I shall meddle with him any more: *he is too dirty a writer for me to touch.*" Mr. Wesley did however, condescend to "touch" this "dirty" writer again. On August 24th, we find the following entry in his Journal: "Thursday 24th, I wrote a second letter to Dr. Free, the warmest opponent I have had for many years. I leave him now to laugh, and scold, and witticise, and call names, just as he pleases; for I have done."

On August 10th, the fifteenth Conference began at Bristol. Mr. Wesley says, it "began and ended in perfect harmony." The doctrine of christian perfection received much consideration.

In this year Mr. Wesley published his "Twelve reasons against separating from the Church of England." His brother Charles says with regard to them, "I think myself bound in duty to add my testimony to my brother's. His twelve rea-

sons against our ever separating from the Church of England, are mine also. I subscribe to them with all my heart."

1759. On April 8th, Thomas Walsh, one of Mr. Wesley's preachers, died, aged 28 years. This young man was not only remarkable for earnestness and abundant success in his ministry. but likewise for his almost unparalleled acquaintance with the scriptures in their original tongues. "Such a master of bible-knowledge," says Mr. Wesley, "I never knew before, and never expect to see again."

On August 8th, the sixteenth Conference began in London. The doctrine of christian perfection was again considered; but nearly the whole time of the Conference was occupied in examining the preachers. The result was highly satisfactory, notwithstanding the severity of the scrutiny. "Wednesday, 8th, our Conference began," says Mr. Wesley, "the time of which was almost entirely employed in examining whether the spirit and lives of our preachers were suitable to their profession. On Saturday, in the afternoon, we concluded. Great was the unanimity and love that reigned among us; and if there were any who hoped or feared the contrary, they were happily disappointed."

From this time the moral, religious, and ministerial character of the preachers was closely examined at every annual Conference, and every case of incompetency or delinquency that was discovered was promptly dealt with according to its demerits. A discipline so strict as this may

he looked for elsewhere, but it will be looked for in vain. The natural consequence was, that the Methodist Conference and Methodist ministry generally, was kept in a state of far greater efficiency and purity than could have been otherwise secured ; and for good sense, sterling ability, ardent zeal, and fervent piety, Methodist preachers, as a body, became unsurpassed, if not unequalled, by any other body of men in existence.

CHAPTER IX.—*From the year 1760, till 1770.*

1760. On August 29th, the seventeenth Conference began at Bristol. Contrary winds detained Mr. Wesley in Ireland about a week beyond the time he had arranged to meet with his preachers. Because of this delay he only spent two days in Conference with them. Mr. Wesley observes that they "had been waiting for him all the week."—Without *him* the preachers could do nothing. In those days if he were absent, there could not be a Methodist Conference.

On October 25th, George the Third succeeded his grandfather, George the Second, to the British throne. From the young king everything just and honourable was expected ; and religion, it was considered, might safely calculate upon the royal favour

and support. These expectations were happily realized. He adhered through life to the noble declaration which he made in his first address, viz :—“That it was his fixed purpose, as the best means to draw down the Divine favour on his reign, to countenance and encourage the practice of true religion and virtue, and maintain the toleration inviolable.” It is almost needless to remark that this “fixed purpose” of his Majesty was carried out to an unparalleled extent. The Methodists, it is commonly believed, were particularly noticed and favoured by him. Piety is amiable in all, but when found in royalty it is invested with a peculiar charm. Religion in a king—devotion in a monarch—is such an admirable union of amiability and majesty—of moral beauty and power—that we cannot but consider it the perfection of human nature.

This year a most remarkable revival began in the connexion. Methodism itself was but an extensive revival of evangelical religion, but at this time, Methodism itself received a new impulse. Many hundreds of persons who had for several years remained almost stationary in spiritual things, were now blessed with an extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost, and became the partakers of the purity and enjoyment of entire sanctification. “And wherever” says Mr. Wesley “the work of sanctification increased, the whole work of God increased in all its branches. Many were convinced of sin, many justified, and many backsliders healed.” This “glorious work” rapidly spread through most parts of England, and a

great part of Ireland. But a great revival of genuine religion like this could not be allowed to proceed unmolested. It could not be stopped, but, as Mr. Myles observes, "when Satan could not hinder, he strove to disgrace it." The fervent zeal of some of the leading revivalists in the London society, degenerated into a wild fanaticism. They became religious madmen. This mental disease manifested itself in a variety of ways. Mere feelings and impressions were relied upon, when unauthorised, and even opposed by the bible. The discernment of spirits, and the spirit of prophecy, were claimed, and their opponents were treated with acrimonious contempt. Because of the spirit of prophecy which they pretended was bestowed upon them, they predicted with confidence that the world would be destroyed on February 28th, 1762; but they found, to their confusion, that for some mysterious reason, the conflagration was postponed. Mr. Wesley was, at first, inclined to deal leniently with these enthusiastic dreamers, because of the good mixed up with the evil; but when he saw the extensive mischief they were doing, he zealously and firmly opposed them, both in public and private. A division was the natural consequence; Mr. Maxfield and George Bell, the two leading London fanatics, drawing after them a considerable number of followers. "Poor George Bell is still alive,"—say Messrs. Coke and Moore in the year 1792, "but he makes no pretensions to religion. He has been for many years a deplorable instance of the danger which arises even to truly pious

persons from giving place to any *impression* that does not agree with the only true standard, *the word of God.*"

1761. On September 1st the eighteenth Conference began in London. Mr. Wesley tells us that the work of God was "swiftly increasing;" and he found it necessary, on account of the fanaticism of some of the men who were connected with the work, to warn his preachers against patronizing and defending their religious extravagance.

1762. On August 9th the nineteenth Conference began in Leeds. Mr. Wesley remarks "our Conference began on Tuesday morning, and we had great reason to praise God for his gracious presence from the beginning to the end."

On November 2nd Mr. Wesley wrote an earnest and powerful letter to Mr. Maxfield, the leader of the fanatical party in London. It had no effect upon him however,—his pretended inspirations having raised him far beyond the reach of argument.

1763. On April 7th the Rev. Mr. Grimshaw died, in the 55th year of his age, and in the 21st from his settlement at Haworth. Though a clergyman of the Church of England, he was much attached to the people called Methodists, and wrote a powerful pamphlet in their defence. He even acted in the capacity of "assistant" to Mr. Wesley. His piety was fervent; his zeal in the cause of God untiring; and his usefulness extensive. "His behaviour throughout his last sickness," says Mr. Wesley, "was of a piece with

the last twenty years of his life : from the very first attack of his fever, he welcomed its approach. His intimate knowledge of Christ abolished all the reluctance nature feels to a dissolution, and triumphing in Him who is the resurrection and the life, he departed April the 7th, in the fifty-fifth year of his age, and the twenty-first year of his eminent usefulness."

On July 19th the twentieth Conference commenced in London. It continued five days. A more than ordinary amount of business was transacted during its sittings. All the Minutes of preceding Conferences respecting discipline, were now, for the first time, collected together and published. An account of the design and present state of Kingswood School was drawn up. A Deed of Trust, prepared by three eminent lawyers, for the settlement of the chapels or preaching-houses, was printed and recommended to the societies. A fund for the support of worn-out preachers was commenced. The Methodist itinerancy had now been in existence about twenty-two or twenty-three years, and some of the elderly preachers were becoming unable to fulfil their laborious duties, and no provision had been made for their support when thus "worn-out" in the work of God. This emergency caused Mr. Wesley and his Conference to commence "The Preachers' Fund."

The number of circuits, at this time, stood as follows :—In England, *twenty*. 1. London ; 2. Sussex ; 3. Norwich ; 4. Bedford ; 5. Wiltshire ; 6. Bristol ; 7. Devonshire ; 8. Cornwall ; 9.

Staffordshire; 10. Chester; 11. Whitehaven; 12. Lincolnshire; 13. Sheffield; 14. Leeds; 15. Birstall; 16. Haworth; 17. York; 18. Yarm; 19. The Dales; 20. Newcastle. In Wales, *two*. 1. Pembrokeshire; and 2. Brecknockshire. In Scotland, *two*. 1. Edinburgh; and 2. Aberdeen. In Ireland, *seven*. 1. Dublin; 2. Waterford; 3. Cork; 4. Limerick; 5. Castlebar; 6. Athlone; 7. The North. In all, *thirty-one*.

1764. In the early part of this year Mr. Erskine re-published in Scotland Mr. Hervey's *Eleven Letters*, with a violent preface of his own. They had been previously published in England, but here they did no harm. Mr. Erskine used all his influence to spread them in Scotland, and unhappily with too much success. They greatly prejudiced the Scotch against the Methodists, and thus retarded the work of God. Mr. Hervey had been one of the little society of Oxford Methodists; and, according to his own confession, was under everlasting obligations to Mr. Wesley for his kindness to him while at the University. In one letter to Mr. Wesley dated "Oxon, September 2nd, 1736," he says, "as for me, I am still a most weak, corrupt creature. But blessed be the unmerited mercy of God, and *thanks be to your never-to-be-forgotten example*, 'That I am what I am.'" In the same letter he acknowledges that Mr. Wesley had been both a "father" and a "friend" unto him; and says in the warmth of his affection, "I will tell of your love before the universal assembly, at the tremendous tribunal." And in another letter dated "Weston, December

30th, 1747," he observes to Mr. Wesley, "Assure yourself, dear sir, that I can never forget that tender-hearted and generous Fellow of Lincoln, who condescended to take such compassionate notice of a poor under-graduate; whom almost everybody condemned; and no man cared for his soul." How changeable and uncertain is human friendship! "*I can never forget!*" Mr. Hervey did not indeed forget Mr. Wesley,—his *father* and *friend*;—he did not forget him. It would have been well if he had. He remembered him certainly, for he wrote a libel upon him. The fact was, Mr. Hervey having embraced the doctrine of the Decrees, his affection for Mr. Wesley declined, and the "Eleven Letters" were produced. Upon his death-bed, however, he

"Doom'd the unfinished libel to the flames;"

but notwithstanding his dying wish, a *friend*(?) published the work after his death. Both Mr. Wesley and Mr. Sellon wrote conclusive replies.

Charles Wesley was requested to compose an epitaph for Mr. Hervey, but such was the strength of his resentment and indignation, because of the treatment which Mr. Wesley had received from him in these "Eleven Letters," that, instead of writing his epitaph, he wrote some indignant verses concluding with

"Let Madam or Romaine record his praise,
"Enough that Wesley's brother can *forgive*."

In justice, however, to Mr. Hervey, it must be observed (what became afterwards known) that a

Mr. Cudworth, a violent and bigoted Antinomian, had inserted in the "Letters" the most unjust and virulent passages, having indeed both "*put in and put out what he pleased.*"

On April 19th Mr. Wesley wrote a truly christian circular letter to all the converted clergy whom he knew in England, inviting them to unite with him, and with each other, for the purpose of spreading christian holiness throughout the land. The three great doctrines which he considered and required that they should all believe and preach, were;—1st. Original Sin; 2nd. Justification by Faith; and 3rd. Holiness of heart and life. He wrote to about fifty clergymen, but only three sent him replies. This result seems to have almost destroyed his lingering hope of a union with the clergy. "They are," says he, "a rope of sand, and such they will continue."

On August 6th the twenty-first Conference began in Bristol. The Minutes were not published. Several clergymen attended, being desirous of persuading Mr. Wesley to relinquish his societies in various places into the hands of the pious church ministers living at those places. Mr. Walker, of Truro, made the same proposal to Mr. Wesley in 1757, and he was satisfactorily answered upon the subject. These clergymen (twelve in number) now renewed Mr. Walker's proposition, and Charles Wesley supported them; declaring, in his warmth, that, if he were a parish minister, the Methodist preachers should not preach in his parish. But Mr. Wesley having

strong and unanswerable objections to the scheme, remained firm and unyielding ;—his preachers unanimously concurring with him. The clergymen being unwilling to unite with him in advancing the cause of God, excepting upon these virtually impossible conditions, he was reluctantly obliged to abandon all hope of an union with them.

1765. On August 20th the twenty-second Conference began at Manchester. This was the first time it was held there. Among many other subjects, the propriety of *female-preaching* was discussed. Mr. Wesley permitted it in extraordinary cases. From this period the Minutes of the Conference were annually published.

There were now twenty-five circuits in England, four in Scotland, two in Wales, and eight in Ireland ;—making thirty-nine in all ;—and there were ninety-two preachers given up entirely to the work, labouring in them.

From this time the regular annual Conferences consisted (with only one or two exceptions) of Mr. Wesley, and those of his preachers, who were wholly engaged in the itinerant work, and under his own direction and control.

1766. On August 12th, the twenty-third Conference was commenced in Leeds. "Tuesday 12th, our Conference began," says Mr. Wesley, "and ended on Friday evening. A happier Conference we never had, nor a more profitable one. It was both begun and ended in love, and with a solemn sense of the presence of God."

The *initials* of those preachers who desisted, or

were expelled, from the itinerancy were now first published in the Minutes. "What preachers are laid aside this year?" Answer. "J—— B—— and J—— M——."

Some persons having disturbed the societies since the previous Conference, respecting the separation of the Methodists from the Established Church, asserting that the separation had already taken place, Mr. Wesley and his preachers adopted a Minute wherein it is contended that the Methodists are not dissenters or seceders. Mr. Wesley found it also necessary, because of the complaints which had been made, to explain the origin of his power, and defend his possession of it. He likewise dealt very faithfully both with preachers and people; and especially insisted upon the preachers attending to pastoral visitation.

In answer to the question "What is our total debt for building?" it is stated to amount to "£11,383 Os. 0d."

1767. On August 18th, the twenty-fourth Conference began in London. "Love and harmony," says Mr. Wesley, "reigned from the beginning to the end; but we have all need of more love and holiness; and in order thereto, of crying continually, 'Lord increase our faith.'"

The *names* of those travelling preachers who ceased to travel were now for the first time printed in the Minutes of Conference. "What preachers desist from travelling? Answer. "John Morley, James Stephens, Simon Day, William Whitwell, and James Kershaw."

At this Conference, directions were given to

promote a revival of the work of God;—quarterly, and occasional fasts, were to be observed;—smuggling was, if possible, to be put down; and bribery prevented. Directions were also given respecting the attendance of preachers at the Conference.

The number of members in the Circuits was now for the first time published. The circuits, preachers, and members, stood as follows:—

		Circuits.	Preachers.	Members.
In England	...	25	75	22,410
In Ireland	...	9	19	2,801
In Scotland	...	5	7	468
In Wales	...	1	3	232
Total ...		40	104	25,911

1768. On March 9th, six students were expelled from the University of Oxford, for “holding *methodistical* tenets, and taking upon them to pray, read, and expound the scriptures, and sing hymns in a private house.” The writings and example of Mr. Wesley were no doubt the cause of their “fanaticism,” though they were not connected with the Methodist society.

In April, Mr. Wesley, who always manifested great anxiety for the welfare of the young, was much pleased by a most remarkable revival of religion among the children at Kingswood school. Many of them were truly converted to God.

On August 16th, the twenty-fifth Conference began in Bristol. “Our Conference began on

Tuesday 16th, says Mr. Wesley, "and ended on Friday 19th. Oh what can we do for more labourers? We can only cry to 'the Lord of the harvest.'"

In answer to the question "Should itinerant preachers follow trades?" a long Minute was adopted in which it was decided that they should not. Some three or four preachers did at this time, "follow trades," but they were required to relinquish them before the next Conference.

In order to revive and enlarge the work of God, Mr. Wesley pressed upon the attention of the preachers the necessity of disseminating Methodist literature; of preaching early in the morning where a congregation could be gathered together; of putting the men and women into *band*; of attending to every part of the Methodist discipline; of avoiding formality in singing; of regular fasting; of pastoral visitation; of attending to the rising generation; of being themselves more devoted to God; and of the necessity of adhering to the Established Church.

1769. On August 1st, the twenty-sixth Conference commenced in Leeds. The Conference had the pleasure of hearing that Methodism had begun to take root in America. "On Thursday," says Mr. Wesley, "I mentioned the case of our brethren in New York who had built the first Methodist meeting-house in America, and were in great want of money, but much more of preachers, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pillmoor, willingly offered themselves for the service;

by whom we determined to send them fifty pounds, as a token of our brotherly love."

Mr. Wesley seems, even at this early period, to have considered with some anxiety, the deplorable consequences to the societies which must follow his death, if he were taken away under existing circumstances. He mentioned the matter to this Conference, and then left it for their serious consideration. His desire was to preserve the societies in one connexion, and this great object was considered by him with the most earnest solicitude. He hoped, however, to accomplish it by the means of his preachers.

At this time, the number of members in the Methodist society, were as follows ;—

	Members.
In England	24,256
In Wales	300
In Ireland	3,180
In Scotland	527
	<hr/>
Total.....	28,263
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CHAPTER X.—*From the year 1770 till 1780.*

1770. On August 7th, the twenty-seventh Methodist Conference, was begun in London. Notwithstanding the rule which was made two years before, forbidding the preachers following any trade, it appears that a few of them still continued the practice. This Conference having become acquainted with the fact, determined to put an end to such a disregard to its authority. Hence the following minute:—"Two years ago, it was agreed, that itinerant preachers ought not to follow trades. How can we secure the observance of this? Answer. It is agreed by all the brethren now met in Conference this 9th day of August, 1770, That no preacher who will not relinquish his trade of buying and selling, or making and vending pills, drops, balsams, or medicines of any kind, shall be considered as a travelling preacher any longer. And that it shall be demanded of all those preachers who have traded in cloth, hardware, pills, drops, balsams, or medicines of any kind, at the next Conference, whether they have entirely left it off, or not. But observe: we do not object to a preacher having a share in a ship," This "Minute of Conference" was evidently drawn up by Mr. Wesley. It is characteristic of him. When he mentioned the "demand" which was to be made at the next Conference of the trading preachers, whether they had or had not "entirely left off"

selling their "cloth, hardware, pills, drops, and balsams," he little thought how *inquisitorial*, and *un-English* it was to make such "brotherly inquiries." He must have forgotten that such a question, or rather such a "demand," would lead the disobedient preachers to *criminate themselves*. This dreadful consequence of his personal examinations and questionings, could not have once entered the mind of the founder of Methodism, or he would not, we should think, have persisted in such an intensely "un-English" and "inquisitorial" course of proceeding. He should have produced *evidence*, instead of asking *questions*. He should have given *proof*, instead of making "*demands*."

It was at this Conference that the Minutes were agreed to which occasioned the great Calvinistic controversy. A licentious Antinomianism had spread its destructive influences far and wide, and Mr. Wesley was determined, if possible, to give it a check. Thus originated the celebrated anti-Calvinistic Minutes. "Take heed to your doctrine"; says Mr. Wesley, "We said in 1744, 'We have leaned too much towards Calvinism.' Wherein?" Several points are stated; but the paragraph which gave the most offence was that containing the remarks upon merit:—"Is not this 'Salvation by works?' Not by the *merit* of works, but by works as a *condition*. As to *merit* itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid, we are rewarded *according* to our works, yea, *because* of our works. How differs this from *for the sake of our works?* And how

differs this from *secundum merita operum*, as our works *deserve*? Can you split this hair? I doubt I cannot."

When the "Minutes of Conference" were published, some zealous Antinomians and Calvinists, were filled with horror and alarm at the dreadful propositions contained and defended therein. They foolishly imagined that Mr. Wesley and his preachers were undermining the foundations of Christianity; that they were presumptuously setting aside the atonement made by Jesus Christ; that they were insisting upon the real and proper merit of man's own works; and contending for the blasphemous doctrine that we may purchase and secure our salvation by our own endeavours! They might have been satisfied, if they had considered the subject with calmness and candour, that such could not have been Mr. Wesley's intentions, because of his well-known sentiments, fully and uniformly expressed in his numerous writings; and likewise, even from these very "Minutes" themselves. Salvation by the intrinsic *merit* of works, is herein expressly repudiated; but that was, of course overlooked, blindness and bigotry being ever inseparable. It may however, be justly admitted, that, considering the prevalence of Calvinistic and Antinomian notions, some of the language employed in the "Minutes" was not sufficiently guarded.

On November 18th, Mr. Wesley preached Mr. Whitfield's funeral sermon, taking for his text, Numbers xxiii. 10; "Let me die the death of

the righteous, and let my last end be like his !” It was shortly afterwards printed and published. It is entitled “A Sermon on the death of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield ; preached at the Chapel in Tottenham-court road, and at the Tabernacle, near Moorfields, on Sunday, November 18, 1770. By John Wesley, M.A. late Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxon ; and Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Countess Dowager of Buchan.” It may be observed that the preacher does ample justice to the character and labours of his illustrious cotemporary and friend.

1771. In this year Mr. Wesley commenced the publication of an uniform edition of his own works. It was completed in thirty-two duodecimo volumes ; the last of which bears the date of 1774. His design was to give the world a perfect and consistent embodiment of his principles. Thus he altered what he considered required alteration ; added where any argument or narrative, wanted addition ; and suppressed whatever he thought needed suppression. His desires for the completeness and perfection of this edition of his writings, were, however, unhappily frustrated by the unaccountable negligenco of the printer, William Pine of Bristol ; who allowed numerous inaccuracies, some of them being of a very serious nature, to disfigure the work.

On January 23rd, Mr. Wesley was finally deserted by his wife. In his Journal he mentions the circumstance thus ; “ Wednesday 23rd, For what cause I know not to this day, ———

CHAPTER X.—*From the year 1770 till 1780.*

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The embarrassing circumstances in which she was thus placed by the small number of her adherents, appears to have somewhat subdued the haughty spirit of the Countess, and to have mitigated the violence of her indignation. On the evening previous to the assembling of the Conference, she wrote to Mr. Wesley, saying, "As christians, we wish to retract what a more deliberate consideration might have prevented." And Mr. Shirley also sent a respectful note to him, acknowledging that the Circular Letter had been "too hastily drawn up, and improperly expressed," and hoping that his "recantation" of it, might "prevail as an example for the recantation of the Minutes." On the morning the Conference opened, Mr. Shirley again wrote to Mr. Wesley, and his preachers, expressing regret that the Circular Letter should have given offence, and requesting to know by what other way more agreeable or convenient to the Conference the protesting party might be admitted to make objections to the Minutes of the Conference of August, 1770." Mr. Wesley, being persuaded of the humility and submissiveness, of the "protesting" gentlemen, kindly invited them to meet the Conference; but, probably to make them still more sensible of their own impotence, he deferred the interview until the *third day*. Having thus waited Mr. Wesley's time, on the third morning, they were admitted. It seems, from her biographer, that Lady Huntingdon was only hindered from attending the Conference by a desire to avoid giving

a plain proof of the charge that she herself headed the opposition. Thus she very wisely determined to abstain from presenting herself before the Conference unless "summoned!" Mr. Shirley and his friends had a lengthened conversation with Mr. Wesley and his preachers, and mutual and satisfactory explanations were given. "We had," says Mr. Wesley in his Journal, "more preachers than usual at the Conference, in consequence of Mr. Shirley's Circular Letter. At ten on Thursday morning he came, with nine or ten of his friends. We conversed freely for about two hours; and I believe they were satisfied that we were not so "dreadful heretics" as they imagined, but were tolerably sound in the faith."

For the sake of peace, Mr. Wesley and fifty-three of his preachers signed a Declaration, wherein they candidly acknowledged that the "Minutes" were "not sufficiently guarded in the way they are expressed;" and they solemnly declared in the sight of God that, so far from trusting in their own works for salvation, they had "no trust or confidence but in the alone merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for justification or salvation, either in life, death or the day of judgment." One preacher, and only one, refused to sign this Declaration. This was Thomas Olivers, a man of considerable penetration and judgment, remarkable for his unwavering opposition to Calvinism, and of whose abilities Mr. Wesley had so high an opinion, that he pronounced him "a full match" for the Rev. August

tus Toplady, who was a most determined defender of the Decrees.

The "Minutes," though they had given such great offence to many persons who considered themselves "real protestants," and were somewhat unguardedly worded, were certainly scriptural; and this Declaration was also scriptural, though it was as unguarded as the "Minutes." The unfair advantage which was afterwards taken of it, caused Mr. Wesley to regret that he and his preachers had signed it at all.

The Rev. Walter Shirley, whose two chief characteristics appear to have been mildness of disposition and weakness of understanding, published "A Narrative" in explanation of the various proceedings which had taken place, and in defence of himself. The galling use which Mr. Fletcher had made of Mr. Shirley's published sermons in his First Check, caused that gentleman in his "Narrative" to "recant them in the face of the whole world." Mr. Fletcher wrote a reply to this "Narrative" in three letters to the reverend author, and these form the Second Check to Antinomianism.

1772. Mr. Richard Hill now entered the lists against Mr. Wesley, against the Minutes, and against their vindicator. He wrote "five letters" to Mr. Fletcher, which he ably and completely answered in *one*, dated Madeley, February 3rd, 1772; and this forms the Third Check to Antinomianism.

Mr. Richard Hill enraged beyond measure at the fine irony and conclusive reasoning of the

Vicar of Madeley, wrote six other letters, being a "Review" of the doctrines taught by Mr. Wesley, which the vindicator justly compares to "a storm of hail, pouring down from the lowering sky, ushered by some harmless flashes of lightning, and accompanied by the rumbling of distant thunder."

On August 4th, the twenty-ninth Conference was begun at Leeds.

On September 9th, Mr. Wesley finished his answer to Mr. Richard Hill's attack upon his consistency, in his "Review." The conclusion of this decisive reply is written with extraordinary power.

Mr. Rowland Hill, with more spirit than judgment, now pushed himself into the controversy, and bestowed upon Mr. Fletcher some "Friendly Remarks."

A "Fourth Check," finished on "November 15th, 1772," soon appeared, wherein Mr. Fletcher replied both to Mr. Richard's "Review," and Mr. Rowland's "Remarks."

1773. On March 14th, Mr. Wesley finished writing some powerful and just "Remarks" on Mr. Richard Hill's "Farrago Double Distilled;"—a most unfair and scandalous production.

On August 3rd, the thirtieth Conference began in London. In order to lay a foundation for the future union of the preachers, certain articles of agreement were signed by all who attended this Conference. These articles are as follows:—They agreed, 1st. To devote themselves entirely to God. 2nd. To preach the old Methodist doctrines. And 3rd. To observe and enforce

the whole Methodist discipline. These articles of agreement had been proposed by Mr. Wesley for the consideration of his preachers at the Conference of 1769. At this year's Conference they were signed by 47 preachers. In 1774, by 72; and in 1775, by 80. The objects aimed at in this agreement, were afterwards fully secured by the celebrated Deed of Declaration.

Mr. Richard Hill being now anxious to get out of his controversial difficulties, wrote and published a pamphlet entitled "The Finishing Stroke," which Mr. Fletcher answered in the first part of his fifth check to Antinomianism. The last part of the "fifth check" was employed in answering some portion of Mr. Berridge's "Christian World Unmasked." Mr. Richard Hill having composed a so-called "Creed for Arminians," which grossly misrepresented their opinions, Mr. Fletcher being determined to fully meet and repel all the attacks of his opponent, provided a perfect antidote to the erroneous statements contained in this "Fictitious Creed," by writing "A Genuine Creed," a creed "for those who believe that Christ died for every man."

These discussions, which had now continued for between two and three years, were not wholly confined to the doctrinal points contained in the "Minutes" of 1770, but embraced all the distinctive doctrinal peculiarities of both Calvinism and Arminianism. Absolute Predestination; Irresistible grace; Final Perseverance; and other kindred subjects, were subjected to the most thorough examination, and the severest scrutiny.

Christian Perfection, and Justification by works at the judgment-day, were likewise largely discussed. Much was written on both sides, and the controversy, it must be allowed, was conducted with considerable ability. The two Hills, however, unhappily distinguished themselves not only for bitterness, but also for low buffoonery. Wesley and Fletcher wrote with the courtesy of christian gentlemen; but Richard and Rowland Hill resorted to the lowest means to injure the reputation of their opponents, employing both language and sentiments most unworthy and unbecoming. The amount of insult and abuse which was poured upon Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher during this controversy is almost beyond credibility. Their opinions, writings, and conduct, were treated without the slightest respect or consideration; and unjust reflections, bitter reproaches, and offensive epithets, were showered upon them in the greatest abundance. In a pamphlet entitled "A Conversation between Richard Hill Esq., the Rev. Mr. Madan, and Father Walsh," a Benedictine Monk at Paris,—the Holy Father is represented as condemning Mr. Wesley as "a Pelagian," and the "Minutes" as being "too near Pelagianism:" and from this the editor concludes that "the principles in the extracts of the Minutes are too rotten even for a Papist to rest upon," and supposes that "Popery is about mid-way between Protestantism and Mr. J. Wesley."

Mr. Richard Hill at the very commencement of his "Review," violently charges the pious vicar of Madeley with dealing in "sneer, banter, sarcasm,

notorious falsehood, calumny, and gross perversions;" and at page 13 he accuses Mr. Fletcher "of the grossest perversions and misrepresentations that perhaps ever proceeded from any author's pen," and afterwards very kindly says, "Forgeries of this kind have long passed for no crime with Mr. Wesley: I did not think you would have followed him in these ungenerous artifices, &c."

Mr. Fletcher imputes all the blame of these unjust accusations upon *Calvinism* itself. "It is" says he, personifying and addressing Calvinism, "it is through the mists which thou raisest that he [Mr. Richard Hill] sees in the works of one of our most correct authors, [Mr. Wesley] nothing but '*a regular series of inconsistencies, a wheel of contradiction running round and round again.*' Thou lendest him thy deceitful glass when he looks at my Second Check, and cries out, 'Base and shocking slander! Acrimonious, bitter, and low sneers! Horrid misrepresentations and notorious perversions! Abominable beyond all the rest! A wretched spirit of low sarcasm, and slanderous banter runs through the whole book! which contains more than an hundred close pages as totally void of scriptural argument, as they are replete with calumny, gross perversions, equivocations, and a doctrine full of rottenness and deadly poison, the spurious offspring of the man of sin, begotten out of the scarlet whore."

Where is the mercy, or justice, or even civility of this wholesale abuse and reckless condemnation?

Mr. Rowland Hill, who came red hot into the

controversy to the help and rescue of his brother, with his "friendly remarks," particularly distinguished himself for his outrageous treatment of his christian and gentlemanly opponents. The extreme *friendliness* of his "friendly remarks" may be seen by the following extracts. He charges the pious Fletcher with "banter! sarcasm! sneer! abuse! bravado! low arts of slander! ill-natured satire! unfair and ungenerous treatment! false humility! continual sneers! most odious appellations! notorious scandalizing! most indecent ridicule! and slanders which ought even to make a Turk blush!"

Behold a further manifestation of Mr. Rowland Hill's *friendliness*! "In regard to the fopperies of religion you certainly differ from the Popish priest of Madeley; you have made universal havoc of every truth of the gospel; you have invented dreadful slanders; you have blackened our principles, and scandalized our practice; you place us in a manner among murderers,—it shocks me to follow you: blush for the characters you have injured by the rashness and bitterness of your pen; you have invented a set of monsters, and raised an hideous ghost by your own spells and incantations of banter and contempt; numberless sneers, taunts and sarcasm dreadfully decorate the whole of your performance: they are nothing better than infernal terms of darkness which it is hateful to transcribe."

After all these, and many other similar "friendly remarks," well might Mr. Fletcher exclaim, "If

this is my antagonist's *friendliness*, alas! what will be his DISPLEASURE?"

When Mr. Richard Hill again entered the field with his "Finishing Stroke," his spirit and language were quite as bad as before. He almost exhausted even his vocabulary of offensive terms to assail the Vicar of Madeley. He calls him "a spiritual calumniator," and accuses him of "vile falsehood and gross perversion; horrid perversion; falsehood; base disingenuity; base forgeries; with descending to the poor illiberal arts of forgery and defamation; with shocking misrepresentations and calumnies;" and with having "shamefully perverted and misrepresented the doctrines of Anthony Burgess."

After Mr. Richard Hill had thus insulted the devout and holy Fletcher; after he had thus recklessly trampled under-foot all the requirements of christianity, and the decencies of civilized life; after he had thus done violence to his own conscience, and degraded himself before the eyes of the world, well might he confess at the end of his "Finishing Stroke," "*Controversy, I am persuaded, has not done me any good.*" Mr. Fletcher was not reduced to the necessity of making such a humiliating confession. On the contrary, he could say, that as a *man*, a *divine*, a *protestant*, a *preacher*, an *anti-Calvinist*, a *controversialist*, an *Arminian*, a *witness for the truth of the gospel*, a *follower of Christ*, a *disputant*, a *believer*, a *member of the Church of England*, a *christian*, and a *writer*, the controversy had done *him* good.

1774. On August 9th, the thirty-first Conference commenced in Bristol. "The Conference,"

says Mr Wesley in his journal, "begun and ended in love, fully employed me on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and we observed Friday, the 12th, as a day of fasting and prayer for the success of the gospel."

On November 5th, John Downs, a Methodist preacher, died. He was gifted with the most extraordinary natural abilities. "I suppose" says Mr Wesley when speaking of him, "he was by nature full as great a genius as Sir Isaac Newton;" and after giving some wonderful instances in support of his observation, he further remarks concerning him, "I suppose such strength of genius as this has scarce been known in Europe before." The fact is, that not merely one, but many of the early Methodist preachers were very extraordinary men.

At this time, and for some years past, the English nation was torn asunder by internal commotions. The king was by many, hated and slandered, and every mean was employed to render him odious to the people. The famous, or rather *infamous*, John Wilkes, Esq., had created much sensation. Junius, the "Great Unknown," that prince of slanderers!—had driven multitudes into political madness by his eloquent denunciations of the ministers and other leading men. The dispute with the American colonies concerning taxation had created a national ferment, and the Middlesex election, and other exciting topics, were common subjects of complaint, debate and contention. Mr. Wesley beheld with sorrow this universal discord and disorder, and being a true

patriot, a genuine lover of his country, he resolved to use his utmost exertions in allaying the spirit of discontent which unhappily prevailed, and in promoting general concord and tranquility. In 1768, he wrote "Free thoughts on the present state of public affairs, in a letter to a friend," wherein he manfully and powerfully defends the King and Parliament. In 1772, he sent forth another powerfully written pamphlet, entitled, "Thoughts upon Liberty," with this motto from Prior,

"I scorn to have my free-born toe,
"Dragoon'd into a wooden shoe."

This was followed by "Thoughts Concerning the Origin of Power;"—in which he shows himself to be no admirer of democratic principles. After much ingenious and conclusive reasoning he pronounces the opinion of "the people" being "the origin of power," as "every way indefensible;" and says, in conclusion, that "common sense brings us back to the grand truth, "There is no power but of God?" In 1775, he wrote "A Calm Address to our American Colonies." In the following year, "Some Observations on Liberty; occasioned by a late tract." The "tract" was written by Dr. Price, who, in his political opinions, was the antipodes of Mr. Wesley. He was a rank democrat; a full length radical;—and that, of all political developments of humanity, is the worst. Such, however, was the zealous Doctor Price. In the year 1776, Mr. Wesley also published "A Seasonable Address to the more

serious part of the inhabitants of Great Britain," respecting the unhappy war with America; signing himself "a lover of peace." This effective "address" was followed by another in the following year. Being at Bristol, Mr. Wesley says in his journal, "On Thursday, (February 6th, 1777,) I wrote "A Calm Address to the Inhabitants of England." May God bless this, as he did the former, to the quenching of that evil fire which is still among us!" In 1778, he also wrote one or two other Serious Addresses to the people of England, on the state of the nation. In all these productions, Mr. Wesley fearlessly stands forth as the uncompromising advocate of law and order;—the firm supporter of government, and the true friend and able defender of monarchy and the king. Mr. Fletcher, it should be observed, stood side by side with him in his political discussions, and distinguished himself by writing two or three powerful pamphlets in defence of the views which he and Mr. Wesley both entertained.

1775. In March, Mr. John Crook, a Liverpool local preacher, went over to the Isle of Man, with the design of introducing Methodism there. This enterprise was eminently successful. He became an itinerant preacher, and his brethren honoured him with the designation of "the Apostle of the Isle of Man."

On August 1st, the thirty-second Conference began in Leeds. Several letters had been sent to Mr. Wesley complaining that many of the preachers had neither grace nor gifts sufficient for the itinerant work, which caused him to in-

stitute a strict inquiry into the matter. "Are there any objections to any of our preachers?" it was asked. "Examine them one by one," it was replied. They were thus personally examined; and we are told in the Minutes, that "considerable objections being made to three of the preachers, the matter was referred to three several committees." The result, however, of this searching investigation was on the whole most satisfactory. The preachers he found had both sufficient piety and ability to qualify them for the proper discharge of their important duties.

1776. On August 6th, the thirty-third Conference was commenced in London. Mr. Wesley again rigorously examined the preachers respecting their gifts, grace, and usefulness, and found it necessary to exclude three of them:—one for insufficiency, and two for misbehaviour. With regard to the rest, he was thoroughly satisfied. There were, at this time, 155 itinerant preachers in Great Britain and Ireland.

Various minor recommendations were given by this Conference to the preachers and people, and measures were taken to stop the progress of Calvinism.

It was asked, "Is there anything else in Ireland which we complain of? Answer. There is. Part of the leaders meet together on Sunday evening without any connection with, or dependance on, the assistant. We have no such custom in the three kingdoms. It is overturning our discipline from the foundations. Either let them act under the direction of the assistant, or let

them meet no more. It is true, they can contribute money for the poor ; but we dare not sell our discipline for money."

When noticing this Conference Mr. Wesley says—"Tuesday 6th, our Conference began, and ended on Friday 9th, which we observed with fasting and prayer, as well for our own nation, as for our brethren in America. In several Conferences we have had great love and unity ; but in this there was, over and above, such a general seriousness and solemnity of spirit as we scarcely have had before."

On August 13th, the Rev. Thomas Coke, D D. joined himself to Mr. Wesley, but his name did not appear upon the Minutes of Conference till 1778. Little could Mr. Wesley imagine how extensively useful this clergyman would be to the Methodist society, and to the world. He had come twenty miles on purpose to meet the Founder of Methodism, who observes, "I had much conversation with him, and an union then began which I trust shall never end."

1777. On April 2nd, Mr. Wesley laid the foundation stone of a New Chapel, in City Road, London. In the latter part of the year a collection was made for it throughout the kingdom.

On June 28th, Mr. Wesley finished writing "An Answer to Mr. Rowland Hill's tract entitled 'Imposture Detected.'" Mr. Richard Hill was violent in his abuse and condemnation of Mr. Wesley, and so was Mr. Rowland Hill in his previous pamphlet, entitled "Friendly Remarks," but in this "Imposture Detected," Mr. Rowland

far surpasses both his brother and his former self. The vulgar epithets and reckless accusations, found in this virulent production, are disgraceful in the extreme. He calls Mr. Wesley an "Apostate miscreant;"—"the lying apostle of the Foundry;"—"a designing wolf;"—"a shatter-brained old gentleman;"—"a grey-headed enemy to all righteousness;"—"the wretch;"—"the crafty slanderer;"—and many other violent and vulgar names. Mr. Augustus Toplady with all his ribaldry, hardly exceeded this. He, and Mr. Rowland Hill were proper companions for each other. The "More Work for Mr. J. Wesley" of the former, and the "Imposture Detected" of the latter, might be very appropriately bound together. In both productions there is the same vulgarity of language, bitterness of spirit, and inveterate hatred of the venerable Founder of Methodism. We may say of Augustus Toplady and Rowland Hill, what Dr. Johnson said of Rosseau and Voltaire, "it is difficult to settle the proportion of iniquity between them," but it is generally admitted, that Toplady was the worse of the two. The anonymous and partial author of "The Life and Times of Selina, the Countess of Huntingdon," when speaking of the spirit manifested by the different disputants in the whole Calvinistic controversy confesses that, "The Calvinists, however, were the most guilty; for Mr. Toplady bore away the palm of contempt and bitterness, evil surmises, and provoking speeches." He, in particular, revelled in abuse, reproach, and slander. No epithets were too degrading for his purpose. No

accusations were too revolting to be employed by him. "An old fox tarred and feathered," "The serpent and the fox," and "Pope John," are the titles of three abusive pieces written against Mr. Wesley, and bearing the impress of Toplady's virulent spirit upon them. Rowland Hill was led to confess that "a softer style and spirit would better have become him," but Toplady never made any such confession. He never showed any relentings. On the contrary, he retained his hatred, in its unmitigated force, even on his death-bed. It having been reported that he had requested an interview with the venerable man he had so much injured, he procured pen and ink, and in the immediate view of dissolution, wrote for the press a "Dying Avowal," wherein he says with regard to Mr. Wesley, "I most sincerely hope my last hours will be much better employed than in conversing with *such* a man." Thus he died as he had lived.

When in the year 1778, Mr. Maxfield reproached Mr. Wesley respecting his conduct in the Calvinistic controversy, Mr. Wesley replied, "Three tracts I have wrote; but in none of these do I slay with the sword of bitterness, or wrath, or envy. In none of them do I speak one bitter, or passionate, or disrespectful word. Bitterness and wrath, yea low, base, virulent invective, both Mr. Richard and Mr. Rowland Hill, (as well as Mr. Toplady) have poured out upon me in great abundance. But where have I, in one single instance, returned them railing for railing? I have not so learned Christ. I dare not rail either

at them or you. I return not cursing, but blessing." A candid, unprejudiced man, cannot but admit the truth of these statements. Mr. Wesley, it must be confessed, in all his tracts, wrote like a christian, a minister, and a gentleman.

On August 5th, the thirty-fourth Conference was begun in Bristol. A report having been widely circulated that the Methodists were a fallen people, Mr. Wesley made particular inquiry whether there was any foundation for such a serious charge. The allegation was proved to be utterly false. It was evident that they were still what they ever had been. Nevertheless, one of the preachers, named John Hilton, being, as he himself imagined, the happy subject of superior illumination, said, he must withdraw from the connexion, for he saw, what none of the rest could see, that the Methodists were really fallen from their primitive state. With the exception of this "jarring string," Mr. Wesley tells us "the Conference concluded in much love."

The practice of recording in the Minutes the names of the preachers who died in the work, was commenced this year.

1778. On January 1st, Mr. Wesley began to publish a monthly periodical which he called "The Arminian Magazine: consisting of extracts and original treatises on Universal Redemption." He continued to publish this valuable work till his death, and it was carried on afterwards under the direction of the Conference.

On August 4th, the thirty-fifth Conference was commenced in Leeds. It was asked, "Are there

any objections to any of our preachers?" Answer. "Examine them one by one.—This was carefully done, and two were set aside." "Tuesday 4th, our Conference began," says Mr. Wesley. "So large a number of preachers never met at a Conference before. I preached morning and evening, till Thursday night; then my voice began to fail; so I desired two of our preachers to supply my place the next day. On Saturday the Conference ended."

On November 1st, Mr. Wesley opened the new chapel in City Road, London.

1779. On August 3rd, the thirty-sixth Conference was begun in London. Directions were given to secure, if possible, a revival of the work of God in Scotland. Methodism did not flourish among the Scotch.

It was asked, Q. "Shall any assistant take into the society any whom his predecessor has put out? Answer. Not without first consulting him." The assistant, *alias* superintendent, had but little difficulty in Mr. Wesley's days of getting rid of a refractory member. He had the power of cutting off a stubborn or rotten branch without first having the opinion of a dozen other persons that the branch was really stubborn or rotten, and therefore *needed* cutting off. He acted according to his own will and judgment in the matter; and this power was retained and exercised by the assistants, *alias* superintendents, until some years after Mr. Wesley's death.

During the year there had been much murmuring against the king and government, and

Mr. Wesley, whose loyalty was unbounded, was determined to stop this "speaking evil of dignities," as far as his own preachers were concerned. So at this Conference the following minute was adopted:—"Q. How can we stop this evil speaking? Answer. Suffer none that speak evil of those in authority, or that prophesy evil of the nation, to preach with us. Let every assistant take care of this?" Mr. Wesley was not only loyal himself, but he required loyalty in all who served him. Through his exertions, and those of the Conference after him, may be imputed, at least in a great measure, the reason why the Methodist preachers and people generally have ever been distinguished for genuine patriotism, ardent loyalty to the constitution, and devoted attachment to the throne.

Towards the latter end of this year, Mr. Wesley published the large hymn book, with a most admirably written preface, dated "London, Oct. 20th, 1779." This "Collection of hymns for the use of the people *called* Methodists" was undoubtedly superior to every other collection of hymns in the English language. It is a complete and systematic body of doctrinal, experimental, and practical divinity. The views of divine truth and the representations of the progress of religion in the soul of man, which are contained therein, are remarkable for force and clearness. The language is chaste, pure, and strong; and the poetry eminently beautiful. Most of the hymns were composed by that prince of sacred poets—Mr. Charles Wesley.

The number of Members in Society in this year, 1779, stood as follows:—

	Members.
In England.....	35,404
In Wales.....	531
In Ireland.....	5,940
In Scotland.....	632
Total	42,507

CHAPTER XI.—*From the year 1780 till 1790.*

1780. In the early part of this year, Mr. Wesley was engaged in a controversy with Father O'Leary, a Capuchin friar in Dublin. This controversy was originated in consequence of a letter written by Mr. Wesley to the printer of the "Public Advertiser" wherein he contended that Roman Catholics ought not to be tolerated while it was a standing and acknowledged maxim, with them that "no faith is to be kept with heretics;" and while the pope and priests can dispense with all obligations, and forgive all sins. In this combat, Mr. Wesley displayed an unusual measure of that vigour and keenness, which he always more or less displayed in controversy. His friends, thinking it might be dangerous for

him to go over to Ireland after such an encounter, dissuaded him from paying his usual visits to that country for a few years, until the fiery resentment of the bigoted papists, because of his powerful attacks upon them, had cooled or died away. When Mr. Wesley did again go over to Ireland, he had the pleasure of taking breakfast with his old antagonist, Father O'Leary.

On August 1st., the thirty seventh Conference began at Bristol. The large Minutes which contained the whole Methodist discipline, were at this Conference, revised and solemnly confirmed. Mr. Wesley says in his journal, "We have been always hitherto straitened for time. It was now resolved, 'For the future we allow nine or ten days for each Conference, that everything relative to the carrying on of the work of God may be maturely considered.' Wednesday 9th. We concluded the Conference in much peace and love."

1781. On June 7th., Mr. Wesley being in the Isle of Man, met the local preachers, who were 22 in number. Mr. Crook had introduced Methodism there, in the year 1775. How greatly had the work of God prospered since that time!

On August 7th, the thirty-eighth Conference was commenced at Leeds. It was decided that it was doubtless the duty of bankrupts to pay their whole debts, if ever they were able; and that if they did not do so they ought not to continue in the society. It was also agreed that no preacher should print or reprint anything, until it had been corrected by Mr. Wesley.

In answer to the question "Can we erect a school for preachers' children in Yorkshire?" it was said, "Probably we may. Let our brethren think of a place, and a master, and send me word." Nothing could exceed Mr. Wesley's anxiety for the welfare and comfort of his preachers and their families. All the "Minutes" published during his life, bear testimony to the truth of this observation. Everything concerning his preachers, even down to the most insignificant portions of diet, received his earnest and constant attention. He was emphatically *their* father. The whole Connexion was Mr. Wesley's charge; but *they* were his peculiar care.

Mr. Wesley thus notices this Conference:—"Monday 6th. I desired Mr. Fletcher, Dr. Coke, and four more of our brethren, to meet every evening, that we might consult together in any difficulty that occurred. On Tuesday, our Conference began, at which were present about seventy preachers, whom I had severally invited to come and assist me with their advice, in carrying on the great work of God. On Monday and Tuesday we finished the remaining business of the Conference, and ended it with solemn prayer and thanksgiving."

1782. In July, Mr. Wesley delegated Dr. Coke, to hold a Conference in Ireland. It was held in Dublin. There were at this time fifteen circuits, thirty-four travelling preachers, and 6472 members. There was a Conference held annually in Ireland afterwards, and Dr. Coke was generally appointed the president.

On August 6th., the thirty-ninth Conference was begun in London. The trustees of the Methodist Chapel at Birstall, in Yorkshire, were at this time rather refractory. The Chapel, not being regularly settled according to the Methodist plan, they were inspired with greater confidence, and boldly objected to the appointment of preachers by the Conference, desiring to choose what preachers *they* thought proper. Nothing of this kind had ever been attempted before, and Mr. Wesley was determined to crush this revolt in its infancy.

Such a case would have been contagious, if not firmly and successfully resisted. He was therefore the more anxious and resolved to make these rebellious lovers of liberty repent of their folly. "What can be done with regard to the preaching-house at Birstall?" was asked. Answer. "If the trustees still refuse to settle it on the Methodist plan, 1st. Let a plain state of the case be drawn up. 2nd. Let a collection be made throughout all England in order to purchase ground, and to build another preaching-house as near the present as may be." The difference between the Conference and the trustees was, however, afterwards peaceably settled.

1783. On July 29th., the fortieth Conference began at Bristol. Mr. Wesley was attacked by a dangerous illness at this Conference, and it was feared that he could not recover, but with the Divine blessing on the use of proper means, he was restored even to perfect health within the short space of a few days.

Kingswood School appears at this time to have

been conducted in a very unsatisfactory manner, and Mr. Wesley was determined either to mend it or end it. Thus it was agreed at this Conference that the school should cease, if the rules were not properly observed.

Many of the chapels at this time also, were not secured to the Conference, and to Methodism :—hence the following minute, “What can be done to get all our preaching-houses settled on the Conference plan? Answer. Let Dr. Coke visit the societies throughout England, as far as is necessary for the accomplishment of this design: and let the respective assistants give him all the support in their power.” In this important work, the indefatigable Doctor only partially succeeded, and was subjected to much obloquy and reproach.

1784. On February 14th, Mr. Wesley ever earnestly desiring to extend the blessings of the gospel, held a consultation with the preachers residing in London, as to the wisdom or propriety of sending missionaries to the East Indies, but after the matter had received full consideration, it was unanimously decided that, “We have no call thither yet, no invitation, no providential opening of any kind.”

On February 28th, Mr. Wesley executed the celebrated Deed of Declaration, which was afterwards enrolled in the High Court of Chancery. Such a Deed had become imperatively necessary, for in the Trust Deeds of the Methodist Chapels, “The Conference of the people called Methodists” was mentioned, and the right and power of appointing preachers to those chapels was conveyed to the

said Conference at Mr. Wesley's death. But who constituted this Conference? While Mr. Wesley lived, there could not be any doubt upon the point, for those preachers whom he requested or permitted to meet with him year by year, to *confer* upon the general affairs of the Methodist society were really and truly the "the Conference of the people called Methodists;" but there could not be such a Conference without the consent and presence of Mr. Wesley. What then could be done after his death? The centre of attraction having lost its weight and influence, the Connexion would most probably have flown into a thousand pieces. To prevent this universal ruin and confusion, Mr. Wesley drew up the Deed of Declaration. In this important Deed he gives a legal meaning and specification to the vague and indefinite phrase, "The Conference of the people called Methodists," declaring that it "consisted of a hundred of preachers and expounders of God's Holy Word, commonly called Methodist preachers." He likewise lays down a number of rules for the regulation of the proceedings of the Conference, and for the preservation and perpetuity of the identity of the body. These *hundred* preachers and their successors for ever constitute the *legal* Conference, and in all Trust Deeds and legal instruments, where "the Conference of the people called Methodists" is mentioned, this Conference is intended and understood.

The importance of this "Deed" to Wesleyan Methodism is beyond calculation, and its importance increases with the increase of our societies.

By it the constitution of the supreme body is for ever defined and settled, and our chapels are preserved for the purposes for which they were built. Without this Deed our vast connexion would become a mere rope of sand ;—the beautiful and extensive machinery of Wesleyan Methodism would fall to pieces : perplexity and strife would everywhere reign and triumph, and all our societies would become involved in one common confusion. By it we are preserved, in a large measure, from feeling the effects of the assaults of spiritual anarchists. It is our sheet anchor during the storms of Methodistic radicalism ; our bulwark against the violent floods of religious democracy. The “Deed of Declaration” is one of the most important ecclesiastical documents in the world.

On July 27th, the forty-first Conference commenced at Leeds. Attending feasts, and “wakes” on the Sabbath was reprobated, and the making of candles by Methodist preachers for their own use, condemned. It was thought by the Conference that the time of trial for young preachers was too short. The term of probation was, therefore, extended from one to four years.

One of the travelling preachers named Nicholas Manners, having disturbed the societies by preaching erroneous doctrine, his case was brought up, and he was expelled. He denied original sin, and it was determined that “No preacher who denies original sin can preach among us ; and we advise our brethren not to hear him.” Poor Nicholas afterwards went over to America to

enlighten the minds of the people, but their darkness proving impenetrable, he came back to England, and sunk into obscurity, neglected and forgotten.

Some of the preachers at this Conference with more vanity than discretion, were very angry because their names had not been inserted in the "Deed of Declaration" by Mr. Wesley. Mr. Fletcher succeeded, in some measure, in appeasing the anger of these mortified and dissatisfied men, and in effecting a reconciliation between them and Mr. Wesley. But the wound was not soundly healed;—the breach was not fully repaired. One of them, Mr. Hampson, senr., soon after became an Independent minister; and another, Mr. Hampson, junr., a Church of England clergyman. Two others, Mr. Ellis and Mr. Pillmoor, also left the Connexion.

The Island of Jersey this year first appeared upon the Minutes of Conference. Methodism, or rather christianity, was introduced into the island by some pious soldiers, who some time after sent to Mr. Wesley for a preacher. Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq., of Raithly Hall, Lincolnshire, though a gentleman of fortune, was a preacher in connection with Mr. Wesley, and he offered *his* services. He had some acquaintance with the French language, which was spoken there, and was in every respect fully qualified for the work. He, therefore, (under the direction of Mr. Wesley) went over to the island, and was the instrument, in the hands of God, of accomplishing much good.

There were, at this time, large numbers of Methodists in America; but for a considerable period they had been deprived of the administration of the sacraments in consequence of the disastrous war with this country, as the resident clergy had either been silenced or had returned to England. The war, however, had at length, ceased, and the American Colonies had become independent of the mother country. "From the time of the peace," we are told, "the new civil government was universally acknowledged; but no ecclesiastical authority of any kind was either exercised or claimed, by any person or persons whatever." The Methodists there, were consequently in a most undesirable condition. They could not partake of the Lord's supper, and their children could not be properly baptized. In these peculiar circumstances they sought Mr. Wesley's advice and direction; and he at once determined to take a step which, though he believed it to be perfectly scriptural and right, he had hitherto refrained from taking, for the sake of peace. He determined to ordain some of his own preachers, and send them over to America. Accordingly in the latter part of this year, he ordained Dr. Coke, and through him, Mr. Asbury, to be joint superintendents over the Methodists in North America; and likewise Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, to act as elders among them. He also abridged the Liturgy of the Church of England, and advised all the preachers to use it on the Lord's day, in all the congregations; and the elders he advised to administer

the Lord's supper according to the manner of the English Church.

It will be observed that Mr. Wesley appointed or ordained Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury "*superintendents*." He did not designate them *bishops*, though he might have done so with propriety; but with that prudence which always characterized him, he avoided the apparent inconsistency of a priest ordaining bishops. However, at an American Conference soon afterwards held at Baltimore, it was agreed to drop the designation of *superintendent*. In their Minutes they observe;—"As the translators of our version of the bible have used the English word *bishop*, instead of *superintendent*, it has been thought by us, that it would appear more scriptural to adopt their term *bishop*." At this Conference the American Methodists were formed into an independent church; and they adopted the title of "Methodist Episcopal Church in America."

It could not be expected that these novel proceedings would be allowed to quietly pass by unnoticed and uncensured. Some in England were mightily offended, and some in America. For Mr. Wesley, a mere priest, to make bishops of Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury was a paradox they could not understand. But the apparent absurdity vanishes into nothing when it is remembered that Mr. Wesley, like many other learned divines, believed that bishops and priests were of one order. Thus he considered himself as much a bishop as any man in Europe, and that consequently he had a right to ordain others. If it

be objected that even on these principles, the proceeding,—however proper in the case of Mr. Asbury, who was unordained,—was improper and absurd in the case of Dr. Coke, it may be replied that the peculiar relationship in which Mr. Wesley stood towards the American Methodists, fully explains the necessity, and justifies the propriety and wisdom of his conduct.

1785. On March 24th, Mr. Wesley observes in his Journal:—"I was now considering how strangely the grain of mustard-seed, planted about fifty years ago, has grown up. It has spread through all Great Britain and Ireland; the Isle of Wight, and the Isle of Man: then to America, from the Leeward Islands, through the whole Continent into Canada and Newfoundland. And the societies in all these parts, walk by one rule, knowing religion is holy tempers; and striving to worship God, not in *form* only, but likewise in *spirit* and in *truth*."

On May 9th, the Rev. Vincent Perronet, Vicar of Shoreham, died in the 92nd year of his age. He was a truly christian man; and one of the few clergymen of the Establishment who were attached to the founder of Methodism, and cordially assisted him in his endeavours to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land. "I follow hard after him in years," says the venerable Wesley, "being now in my eighty-second year of my age. O that I may follow him in holiness; and that my last end may be like his!"

On July 26th, the forty-second Conference was begun in London. "Tuesday, 26th, says Mr.

Wesley, "our Conference began ; at which about seventy preachers were present, whom I had invited by name. One consequence of this was, that we had no contention or altercation at all ; but everything proposed was calmly considered, and determined as we judged would be most for the glory of God."

The "Deed of Declaration" having caused considerable uneasiness in the connexion, all the preachers at this Conference signed papers expressing their approval of the "substance and design" of the said "Deed."

Mr. Wesley now ordained some preachers for Scotland, as he had done before for America. "Having," says he, "with a few select friends weighed the matter thoroughly, I yielded to their judgment, and set apart three of our well-trying preachers, John Pawson, Thomas Hanby, and Joseph Taylor, to minister in Scotland ; and I trust God will bless their ministrations, and show that He has sent them." It had become necessary that some of the preachers should be thus "set apart," or ordained, the Scotch Kirk ministers having refused to give the Methodists the Sacrament of the Lord's supper, unless they abandoned the Methodist society.

On August 14th, the Rev. John William de la Fletchere, Vicar of Madeley, died, aged 56 years. This great and good man, gifted with talents of the highest order, and animated with the piety and zeal of an apostle,—was the unwavering supporter and defender of Mr. Wesley. In the Conference Obituary, in answer to the

question, "Who have died this year?" it is said, "John Fletcher; a pattern of all holiness scarce to be paralleled in a century." Mr. Wesley preached his funeral sermon, and afterwards wrote his life.

1786. On July 25th, the forty-third Conference commenced in Bristol. About eighty preachers attended. The question of separation from the Establishment was largely discussed, and though it was unanimously determined not to separate, it was nevertheless agreed that, in certain cases, service in Church hours should be allowed.

In answer to the inquiry, "Does the General Deed require any alteration in the mode of settling our preaching-houses?" it was said, None, except the insertion of the phrase '*The Conference of the people called Methodists as established by a Poll-Deed of the said John Wesley, under his hand and seal, bearing date the 28th day of February, in the year 1784, and enrolled in his Majesty's High Court of Chancery, and no others,*' instead of the phrase '*The Conference of the people called Methodists, in London, Bristol, or Leeds, and no others.*'"

In a paper dated "August 1st, 1786," written during the sittings of this Conference, Mr. Wesley gives various directions and advice both to the assistants and the other preachers. The last advice to the preachers is, "Inform the leaders that every assistant is to change both the stewards and leaders when he sees good; and that no leader

has power to put any person either into or out of the society."

Mr. Wesley, at this time, appointed Dr. Coke to visit the societies in the British dominions in North America. The laborious Doctor with three other preachers, as missionaries, accordingly set sail. But unfavourable weather drove them from their course, and they were carried to Antigua, an island in the West Indies. Doctor Coke considered this frustration of their designs as providential, and two of the preachers were accordingly left to labour there. The work of God immediately began to take root, and it spread with amazing rapidity.

1787. On July 31st, the forty-fourth Conference commenced in Manchester. Mr. Wesley, who had hitherto only ordained ministers for America and Scotland, after mature consideration now ordained them for England. Being assisted by two clergymen of the Establishment,—the Rev. James Creighton, and the Rev. Peard Dickenson, he set apart, by the imposition of hands and prayer, Alexander Mather, Thomas Rankin, and Henry Moore, without sending them out of the country. He, however, very earnestly advised them to adhere to the Church, as far as their work would allow them. Mr. Wesley was a sincere lover of the Church of England, and every departure from her regular and established usages was the cause of much anxiety, and the result of much deliberation. Though constantly pressed by outward circumstances, he tenaciously clung to the Church, till at length his prejudices and resolu-

tions gradually yielded before the irresistible flood of circumstances which bore upon him. He first ordained preachers for America; he then came nearer home, and ordained them for Scotland; now he yielded still more, and ordained them for England. The thousands of the Methodist people must have the Sacraments administered unto them, but when the clergy refused, what could be done? He saw that it became absolutely necessary to provide for the administration of the Sacraments among his own people, by his own preachers. The path of duty was open before him; he saw, and followed it.

1788. On March 29th, the Rev. Charles Wesley departed this life. The fire of his poetic genius, the power of his preaching, and the ardour of his piety, render him an object of esteem and admiration to every genuine christian. In answer to the usual question at Conference, "Who have died this year?" Mr. Wesley says, "Charles Wesley, who after spending fourscore years of much sorrow and pain, quietly retired into Abraham's bosom. He had no disease; but after a gradual decay of some months,

"The weary wheels of life stood still at last."

His least praise was his talent for poetry; although Dr. Watts did not scruple to say that "that single poem, Wrestling Jacob, is worth all the verses I have ever written!"

On July 29th, the forty-fifth Conference began in London. It was asked, "Are any directions

to be given concerning the weekly and quarterly collections in the circuits.?" Answer. "Let every assistant be particularly careful to enforce the weekly collection of a penny from each member of our society, in the class-meetings, and the quarterly collection of a shilling from each member, that can afford to pay it, at the quarterly visitation."

"I preached," says Mr. Wesley in his Journal, "at the new chapel every evening during the Conference, which continued nine days, beginning on Tuesday, July 29th, and ending on Wednesday, August 6th, and we found the time little enough; being obliged to pass over many things very briefly, which deserved a fuller consideration." "Wednesday, 6th, Our Conference ended, as it began, in great peace. We kept this day as a fast, meeting at five, nine, and one, for prayer; and concluding the day with a solemn watch-night."

1789. In the month of May, Mr. Wesley held a Conference in Edinburgh. This was the only Conference ever held in Scotland. Methodism has not flourished in that country, as in other places.

On July 28th, the forty-sixth Conference commenced in Leeds.

A very unpleasant affair occupied the attention of this Conference. A new chapel had been built at Dewsbury, in Yorkshire, as usual, by public subscriptions; but those who had been nominated trustees assumed the proprietorship, and obsti-

nately refused to settle it according to the Methodist plan. Mr. Wesley remarks upon this Conference, and the conduct of the Dewsbury trustees, as follows, "About a hundred preachers were present, and never was our Master more eminently present with us. Saturday, August 1st, we considered the case of Dewsbury-house, which the self-elected trustees robbed us of. The point they contended for, was this, 'That they should have a right of rejecting any preachers *they* disapproved of! But this we saw would destroy itinerancy. So they chose J—— A—— (John Atlay, Mr. Wesley's book-steward,) for a preacher, who adopted W—— E—— (William Eells, a preacher who had previously left the connexion,) for his curate. Nothing remained but to build another preaching-house, towards which we subscribed two hundred and six pounds on the spot." A collection was likewise made throughout the connexion, and another chapel was built.

It had been confidently reported that many of the preachers disapproved of settling the chapels upon the Methodist plan, and to refute the injurious allegation, all who were present at this Conference, one hundred and fifteen in number, signed a paper, expressive of their full and entire approval of that plan, namely, that Mr. Wesley, and after him the Conference, should have the entire nomination and appointment of the preachers to the chapels, it being obviously impossible to continue and maintain in any other way the system of Methodist itinerancy.

The number of members in society this year, (1789) were as follow:—

	Members.
In Europe	70,305
In the Indies, &c. ...	3,949
Total.....	<u>74,254</u>

CHAPTER XII.—*From the year 1790 till 1800.*

1790. On July 27th, the forty-seventh Conference was begun at Bristol. Nine preachers were appointed as “a Committee for the management of West India affairs;”—that is, the West India “Missions.” Six preachers were also appointed as a Building Committee for Great Britain; and four for Ireland. It was now becoming impossible to properly manage the greatly increased, and rapidly increasing, affairs of the Connexion without appointing committees to consider and superintend the different departments of the work,

This was the last Conference Mr. Wesley attended. “Mr. Wesley’s eye-sight,” says Jonathan Crowther, “was a little impaired, but in business and the pulpit he was vigorous and strong. Many of the preachers on bidding adieu seemed to fear the event of the future year. Mr. Wesley, Dr. Coke, and the Rev. Mr.

Baddily, administered the Lord's supper at parting."

1791. This year was destined to see the termination of the life of the great Founder of Methodism. On February 23rd, Mr. Wesley preached for the last time, at Leatherhead, from Isaiah 55 chap., 6th and 7th verses. This was on the Thursday before his dissolution. He had often prayed that he might not be useless while living, but that he might

" His body and his charge lay down ;
" And cease at once to work and live."

and his prayer was answered. After lingering a very few days he departed this life at a little before ten o'clock in the morning, on Wednesday, March 2nd, at his own house in City road, London. Several preachers and relations were, at the time, around his bed, in the attitude of prayer, commending him to God. Some of his last words were, " The best of all is, God is with us."

The death of this great man, considering his position in the world, was certain to excite considerable commotion. The entire Methodist connexion felt the severity of the blow, and wept. The father had been taken from the family, and had left the whole family in tears. "Thousands of the people," we are told, " with all the travelling preachers, went into mourning for him. The pulpits and many of the chapels, not only in the Methodist Connexion, but in others also, were hung with black cloth. In every place something

was said by way of funeral sermon ; and in many places, discourses were preached on the same subject, which were afterwards published. Many ministers, both of the Establishment, and among the dissenters, mentioned his long, laborious, devoted, useful life, with great respect ; and exhorted their hearers to be followers of him, as he had been of Christ."

To attempt fully to delineate the character of this wonderful man would be a task as arduous as it would be vain. With regard to himself, his constant desire and aim was to be inwardly and outwardly holy ; with regard to his fellow-men, to save them from sin and misery ; with regard to God, to live to His glory. His piety was deep and strong, and his zeal, an ardent, ever-burning flame. His learning was extensive : his wit bright and keen : his judgment solid ; and his memory, retentive. Prudence and caution ever attended him, and moderation regulated the entire course of his conduct. He was meek, but he had firmness and resolution ; he was grave, but he had cheerfulness ; he was exact, but he had graceful ease ; he was plain, but he had politeness ; he was economical and saving, but his charity was unbounded. He was the negation of evil ;—a compound of various goodness ;—a crystallization of excellence ;—a cluster of virtues ;—a religious star of the first magnitude ;—a spiritual gem of the first water ;—the embodiment of christian graces ;—the perfect reverse of all unrighteousness, folly, and fraud ;—the antipodes of everything contrary to the will of

God. What more can I say? To various men, let various praise be given, but

Wesley had every virtue under heaven.

This brief and imperfect description of this great and good man springs from the heart. If the language is thought too strong, it must be forgiven, for I am unable to correct it.

Mr. Wesley had drawn up his Will on February 20th, 1789.—Therein he left all his books which were on sale, to three “faithful friends,” John Horton, merchant; George Wolff, merchant; and William Marriott, stock-broker;—“in trust, for the general fund of the Methodist Conference in carrying on the work of God by itinerant preachers.” His manuscripts he gave to Thomas Coke, Dr. Whitehead, and Henry Moore, “to be burnt or published as they saw good.” He named twelve persons who were to preach in the new chapel, at London; and the same twelve persons he constituted a committee for “appointing preachers to the new chapel at Bath.”

On February 25th he added to his Will, “I give my types, printing-presses, and every thing pertaining thereto, to Mr. Thomas Rankin, and Mr. George Whitfield, in trust, for the use of the Conference.”

On October 5th, 1790, Mr. Wesley executed a Deed wherein he reversed a portion of his Will, and gave all his books, stock-in-trade, &c., to Thomas Coke, Alexander Mather, Peard Dickenson, John Valton, James Rogers, Joseph Taylor,

and Adam Clarke. Though he had transferred the books from the management of three laymen, into the hands of seven preachers, the purpose to which the books were to be appropriated was precisely the same in the Deed as in the Will, viz. "in trust for carrying on the work of God by itinerant preachers."

It may be interesting to see the state of the Methodist connexion when its great Founder was taken away. The following is a statement of circuits, preachers, and members, as they stood at the Conference preceding Mr. Wesley's death, viz., that of the year 1790;—

	Circuits.	Preachers.	Members.
In England	65	— 195	— 52,832
In Ireland	29	— 67	— 14,106
In Wales	3	— 7	— 566
In Scotland	8	— 18	— 1,086
In the Isle of Man ...	1	— 3	— 2,580
In the Norman Isles	2	— 4	— 498
In the West India Isles	7	— 13	— 4,500
In the British domin- ions in America... }	4	— 6	— 800
	—	—	—
	119	313	76,968
In the United States of America..... }	97	198	43,265
	—	—	—
Total...	216	511	120,233
	—	—	—

On July 26th, (1791,) the forty-eighth Conference assembled at Manchester. More than two

hundred preachers were present, and all were deeply impressed with the greatness of the loss which they had sustained in the death of their father, guide, and friend. Mr. William Thompson was chosen president of the Conference, and Dr. Coke, Secretary.

A brief and affectionate Minute was adopted respecting the death of Mr. Wesley, in which the preachers confess themselves unable to express their feelings upon the mournful occasion.

Some were afraid that the hundred men who, according to the Deed of Declaration, constituted the legal Conference, would exercise the powers entrusted to them, to the injury of their brethren. Mr. Wesley himself seems not to have been wholly free from these apprehensions, and to prevent such an abuse of authority, had written a letter, dated "Chester, April 7th, 1785," wherein he beseeched the hundred preachers who formed the legal Conference, "by the mercies of God, never to avail themselves of the Deed of Declaration, to assume any superiority over their brethren." This letter was delivered to the president by Mr. Joseph Bradford, who for many years travelled with Mr. Wesley, and after it had been read, it was immediately and unanimously resolved by the Conference, that all the preachers in full connexion, should enjoy every privilege that the members of the Conference enjoyed, agreeably to the letter of Mr. Wesley, and consistent with the Deed of Declaration. Indeed, Coke and Moore inform us that the Conference had actually "passed a vote to the same purport" as Mr. Wesley's letter, and

“almost in the same words, before they knew of such a request being in existence.”

To supply the want of Mr. Wesley's general superintendence, and preserve the whole economy of Methodism as he left it, the three kingdoms were now divided into districts, and district-meetings of preachers were authorised and appointed with extensive powers. About five circuits formed one district. England was divided into nineteen ; Ireland into six ; and Scotland into two ; total number of districts in Great Britain and Ireland, twenty-seven. Dr. Coke was appointed to hold the next Irish Conference in Dublin, on the first Friday of July. He was likewise appointed delegate to the West Indies. The superintendence of Kingswood School, during the coming year was confided to one Committee, and the examination of all accounts, letters, and missionaries sent to the islands, &c, was confided to another. The stationing Committee was this year instituted.

Soon after Mr. Wesley's death, a certain party in the Connexion who wished to strictly adhere to the *old plan*, as it was called, printed and extensively circulated their opinions throughout the Society, and replies were consequently also written and circulated. Here commenced a dispute which continued for several years, and was the cause of incalculable mischief and disorder. The advocates for the *old plan*, so called, were men who wished the Methodists still to adhere to the Established Church ; while on the other hand, the advocates for the *new plan*, were men who were anxious for the Methodists to have and enjoy all the privileges

which belong to a church of Christ. The administration of the Lord's Supper was the chief cause of contention. The former party being desirous that the members of society should receive it at the hands of the clergy of the Establishment ; and the latter party demanding the scriptural privilege of receiving it at the hands of their own ministers. The Conference judiciously avoided coming to any definite decision upon the question. It was asked, "Is it necessary to enter into any engagement in respect to our future plan of economy ?" Answer. "We engage to follow strictly the plan which Mr. Wesley left us." This resolution was variously interpreted by the different parties. The matter was, however, thus for the present, despatched. "We broke up" says Jonathan Crowther, "in peace and harmony, with cheering prospects, and thankful hearts."

1792. On July 31st, the forty-ninth Conference commenced in London. Mr. Alexander Mather was chosen president, and Dr. Coke again chosen secretary. Some regulations were adopted respecting the president of Conference, and the management of districts ; and the preachers determined to devote themselves entirely to God,

The strange and unprincipled conduct of Dr. Whitehead, who was one of the three persons to whom Mr. Wesley had bequeathed his manuscripts, involved this Conference in a most unpleasant dispute. The Doctor had engaged under the sanction of the Conference, to write a life of Mr. Wesley, and the manuscripts were, at his particular request, delivered into his hands for his ex-

amination and use. This *life* was to be the property of the Connexion, and the Doctor was to have a hundred guineas for the trouble and expense of compilation. But strange to say, he now declared his intention of publishing the work on his own account and responsibility! This unjust and unaccountable conduct on his part, caused a rupture between him and the Conference, and the consequence was, that two separate lives of Mr. Wesley were published; one by Dr. Whitehead, and another by Dr. Coke, and Henry Moore.

The Connexion being now in a state of great agitation concerning holding services in church hours, and the administration of the Lord's Supper, the Conference was much embarrassed. The administration of the Lord's Supper was the chief difficulty. After much serious consideration, and earnest prayer, it was resolved that the question should be settled by drawing lots. This decided that the Lord's Supper should not be administered in the societies for that year. The preachers were much divided in sentiment upon the subject, but they all received this decision as from God. Thus we are informed, that "all were satisfied; all submitted; all was peace." The result was made known to the people in an address, exhorting them to live in peace and love, notwithstanding the difference of opinions on minor matters. This was the first time the Conference addressed the people.

On October 8th. Joseph Cownley, a Methodist preacher, died at Newcastle. He was born in the year 1723, at Leominster, and entered the minis-

try in 1746. Mr. Wesley said of him, "He is one of the best preachers in England."

1793. On July 29th, the fiftieth Conference commenced in Leeds. Mr. John Pawson was chosen president, and Dr. Coke, the secretary. It was decided that no preacher should vote by proxy in the election of president, and various regulations were made respecting district-meetings, &c. It was directed that no gowns, cassocks, bands, or surplices should be worn by any of the preachers; that the title of *reverend* should not be used by them towards each other; and that the distinction between ordained and unordained preachers should be dropped.

The fund for the support of the West India missions being not only exhausted, but considerably in debt, it was resolved that a general collection should this year be made in all our congregations for its relief.

This Conference wrote two "letters" or addresses to the societies, one dated "Leeds, August 6th, 1793," and the other, "August 8th." In "letter No. 1," the Conference clearly and forcibly sets forth the dilemma in which it was placed by some few societies demanding that the sacrament should be given them by their own preachers; and (being determined not to lose any part of the flock because of unessential points) it informs the people it had decided that the sacrament should be administered to those societies which unanimously desired it, and would not be contented without it. "Letter No. 2" is a reply to a circular letter, drawn up by some trustees; and herein the Confer-

ence solemnly declares its determination to adhere as much as possible, to the Established Church ; and repels several false imputations which the trustees had cast upon its members ; protesting in particular, in opposition to their accusers, their loyalty and attachment to the king and constitution.

1794. On July 28th, the fifty-first Conference began at Bristol. Mr. Thomas Hanby was president, and Dr. Coke secretary. A great number of trustees from some of the principal places in the kingdom, assembled at Bristol at the same time as the preachers, and drew up and presented to the Conference an address, containing an expression of their sentiments upon a variety of topics. The Conference entered into communication with them, and some concessions were made in their favour.

It was decided, that, all ecclesiastical titles and apparel should be laid aside agreeably to the resolution of 1793 ; that preaching in church hours should not be allowed, except in the most urgent circumstances ; that the Sacraments should not be administered by the preachers where the peace of the society could be preserved without them ; that the temporal and spiritual affairs should, as much as possible, be separated, the stewards to manage the former, leaving the preachers to manage the latter. "The spiritual concerns," it is said, "shall be managed by the preachers, who have ever appointed leaders, chosen stewards, and admitted members into, and expelled them from the society, consulting their brethren the stewards-

and 'leaders.' It was also decided, that, the trustees in conjunction with the assistant, alias, superintendent, should manage the chapel affairs ; that no trustee should be expelled till his default was proved in the presence of the trustees and leaders ; and that the office bearers in a circuit, with the preachers, should be empowered to try an immoral or defective preacher.

During the ensuing year the connexion was in a state of general excitement and commotion ; which may be attributed in some measure, to the conduct of the trustees of Guinea-street Chapel, Bristol, who, being violent sticklers for the old plan, took offence at Mr. Henry Moore, one of the preachers, because of his having administered the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in a neighbouring chapel, and sent him a lawyer's letter, charging him "at his peril, not to trespass on *their* premises, as *they* had not appointed him to preach there, and no other persons had any authority so to do." This bold procedure, though manifestly indefensible, found some violent defenders. The whole connexion was agitated by the dispute, but the trustees found the public sentiment to be against them. The chief part of the society in Guinea-street Chapel withdrew from it, and proceeded to erect a new one. The stubborn gentlemen were therefore involved in the most unpleasant difficulties ; and when they looked around for sympathy, received almost universal reprobation. The affair caused much excitement for a season, but it was quickly forgotten ;

and in a little while the stolen chapel was restored to Wesleyan Methodism.

1795. On July 27th, the fifty-second Conference assembled at Manchester. Mr. Joseph Bradford was elected president, and, as usual, Dr. Coke, the secretary. The term "assistant" having become by the death of Mr. Wesley an improper and unmeaning designation for the chief preacher in a circuit, its use was about this time, discontinued, and the appropriate one of "superintendent" was adopted in its stead.

It was decided that no preacher should use tobacco either for smoking, chewing, or in snuff, unless it was prescribed by a physician; and the people were requested not to introduce pipes and tobacco into their houses for preachers, except in extreme cases.

Many trustees, from various parts, again met together. The Conference spent the first day in fasting and prayer. The next morning a committee of nine preachers was chosen by ballot, to draw up a Plan of Pacification suitable to the convulsed state of the connexion. These preachers names were;—Joseph Bradford, Thomas Coke, Alexander Mather, William Thompson, John Pawson, Joseph Benson, Samuel Bradburn, Henry Moore, and Adam Clarke. A "Plan" was drawn up embracing rules respecting the administration of the sacraments, and respecting discipline. After a few alterations it was accepted by the Conference, and the trustees also who had assembled together, agreed to it by a large majority. This "Plan of Pacification" drawn up as it was with

great wisdom and judgment, was calculated to satisfy all moderate and reasonable men; but there were some persons in the connexion who seemed resolved not to be satisfied. These were encouraged and led on by Alexander Kilham,—who had been received as a candidate for the ministry in 1785. He was a poor preacher and an obscure man; was quite unknown to many of his brethren, and had been the means of but little spiritual good. He had, however, some acuteness and self-conceit, and was thoroughly democratic in his views. This inexperienced, but bold young preacher, kept, or rather helped to keep, the societies in a continual ferment by a course of vigorous pamphleteering; adopting “Martin Luther,” “Paul and Silas,” “Aquila and Priscilla,” and similar signatures, to baffle inquiry, and perpetuate deception. He, at length, however threw off the mask, and, on September 14th, published a most scurrilous pamphlet, with his own name attached to it, entitled “The Progress of Liberty.”

1796. On February 18th, a District Meeting was held at Newcastle for the purpose of examining and trying Mr Alexander Kilham, for publishing his “Progress of Liberty.” This District Meeting answered no other end than that of furnishing him with fresh matter for reproach and slander. Doubtless it was because he considered he had a large party on his side, that he conducted himself in a manner so improper and unbecoming towards his brethren, and at length set them rudely at defiance.

On July 25th, the fifty-third Conference began in London. Mr. Thomas Taylor was chosen president, and Dr. Coke, secretary. Mr. Kilham had now to stand before the men whom he had traduced, and either retract or substantiate his written statements. Passages were read out of his own books, containing various charges against his ministerial brethren; and when questioned concerning them, it appeared that he had sometimes recorded mere hearsay as 'fact'; and sometimes had written with but limited information upon the circumstances which furnished matter for his pen. When questioned with regard to others of his statements and observations, he only laughed! He was, of course, unanimously expelled from the Connexion; and all the preachers, at the Conference, signed a document, declaring their approbation of the sentence. He exerted all his powers, both in writing and speaking to bring the Methodist ministry into disgrace and contempt; but his agitating course was soon finished, for on the 20th of December, 1798, he died at Nottingham, after a few days illness, occasioned by a bone sticking in his throat.

1797. On July 31st, the fifty fourth Conference commenced in Leeds. Dr. Coke, who had been the secretary at every Conference since the death of Mr. Wesley, was now elected president, and Mr. Samuel Bradburn was chosen secretary.

Mr. Kilham, and his party, had been very active in preparing for a division of the societies, and it appeared that such an issue was almost inevitable. The Conference with that affection-

ate solicitude for the comfort and welfare of the flock which it has ever displayed, was anxious to meet the desires even of the disaffected portion of the people as far as possible, and accordingly gave up a considerable portion of the power which the ministers had possessed and exercised during the life of the venerable Wesley. *Before* this time the superintendent preacher had authority to appoint any person he thought proper to be a leader;—*now* it was decided that the leaders' meeting should give its approbation before such appointment should be made. *Before*, the superintendent had power to choose all stewards, but *now*, (as in the case of leaders) the nomination only was with him, and the approval or disapproval lay with the leaders' meeting to which those stewards belonged. This was the case also with local preachers. *Before* this time, the superintendent had unrestricted authority as to the admission of members into the society:—*now* it was agreed that he should not admit any person whatever, if the leaders' meeting thought proper to declare such person improper to be admitted. *Before*, the superintendent had absolute control over the membership of all the members. He could expel any person (not being a trustee) from the society, at any time, for any real or supposed misconduct, which he considered deserving such an exercise of pastoral authority. But *now* it was decided, that no person should be expelled from the society for any breach of our rules, or even for manifest immorality, till such fact or crime

had been proved at, or to the satisfaction of, a leaders' meeting.

Many other regulations, of less importance, were likewise made.

On August 9th, the "New Connexion" was formed at Leeds; and divisions were effected throughout the whole country. Although twenty thousand members were lost to the Methodist society, only five thousand of them joined the New Connexion.

1798. On July 30th., the fifty-fifth Conference began at Bristol, Mr. Joseph Benson was the president, and Mr. Samuel Bradburn, secretary.

It was decided to help by subscription, at the Conference, and public collections throughout the kingdom, the Methodists of Nottingham and Huddersfield, in recovering their chapels from the Kilhamites, who had unjustly wrested them from their rightful and legal possessors.

Nothing very remarkable occurred at this Conference. The Connexion having been delivered from the withering and blighting influences of strife and discord, now began to look forward with confident expectation for brighter, happier, and better days.

1799. On July 29th, the fifty-sixth Conference was commenced in Manchester. Mr. Samuel Bradburn was chosen president, and Dr. Coke, secretary. The Conference had to perform the painful duty of recording the decease of William Thompson, who was greatly esteemed by his brethren, and had the honour of being elected

the first president after Mr. Wesley's death:— and also of Thomas Oliver, who, for sterling ability, strong piety, and ardent attachment to the Founder of Methodism, and to Methodism itself, was one of the most remarkable of the early Methodist preachers.

Two young men, Jabez Bunting, and Robert Newton, this year entered the ministry.

A letter was received at this Conference by which it appeared that Methodism had begun to take root at Gibraltar; there were then fifty persons in society, and they earnestly requested that a preacher might be sent to them.

The "Itinerant Methodist Preacher's Annuity," and the "Preacher's Friend Society," were both instituted at this time.

The Conference being much embarrassed because of the scarcity of money, adopted measures of relief from such a pressure.

Three "addresses" were written by this Conference. One to the Irish Conference; another to the General Conference in America; and a third to the Methodist societies and congregations in Great Britain, on the distressed state of the finances. "It was a Conference of great peace," says Jonathan Crowther "We were, however, greatly embarrassed for want of money to meet the deficiencies and distresses of many of the brethren, and there was no resource but the making an extraordinary collection in the different circuits."

The Conference, in the address to America, remarks on this year's annual assembly, it "has,

on the whole, been the best we have ever had since the decease of our venerable father in Christ, the Rev. John Wesley."

The circuits, preachers, and members, now stood as follow :—

	Circuits.	Preachers.	Members.
In England	107 —	288 —	84,429
In Ireland	34 —	83 —	16,227
In Scotland	6 —	16 —	1,117
In Wales	5 —	11 —	1,195
In the Isle of Man ...	1 —	4 —	4,100
In the Norman Isles	1 —	7 —	734
In the West India Isles	13 —	23 —	11,170
In the British domin- ions in America... }	13 —	8 —	1,610
	—	—	—
	180	440	120,582
In the United States } of America..... }	109	400	60,169
	—	—	—
Total...	289	840	180,751

CHAPTER XIII.—*From the year 1800 till 1810.*

1800. On July 28th, the fifty seventh Conference began in London, Mr. James Wood was chosen president, and Mr. Thomas Bradburn, secretary.

A very loyal address to the king was drawn up, expressing the abhorrence with which the ministers in Conference assembled, regarded the "late atrocious attempt against the life of his majesty;" and likewise expressing their "thankfulness to Almighty God for His gracious protection so manifestly extended towards his sacred person." This address, according to the *London Gazette* of August 8th, 1800, "his majesty was pleased to receive very graciously.

It was directed by the Conference that a collection should be made in all the congregations for the relief of the Foreign Missions: Quarterly meetings were desired (where it had not been already done) to raise the preacher's allowance to four pounds per quarter; and Dr. Coke's valuable Commentary upon the Sacred Writings was recommended to the notice of both ministers and people.

On August 22nd, Mr. Alexander Mather, a wise, sagacious, and judicious Methodist preacher, died at York, having travelled forty-three years.

1801. On July 27th, the fifty-eighth Conference commenced in Leeds, Mr. John Pawson who

had been president in 1793, was again chosen to that office, and Dr. Coke was chosen secretary. Mr. Pawson having published in 1799, a volume of sermons wherein he had injudiciously made some reflections upon the nobility and clergy; immediately on his taking the presidential chair, a conversation began respecting him. Mr. Pawson solemnly declared that he never intended the objectionable passages to be understood in the very injurious sense which the anti-Jacobin reviewers had been pleased to put upon them; but that he had unquestionably written incautiously. The Conference designated the obnoxious parts of the sermons "unguarded expressions," and while it expressed the "greatest abhorrence" of those sentiments which they had been understood to contain, it expressed its persuasion that Mr. Pawson did not intend to convey those injurious sentiments to the minds of his readers.

This Conference, like several of its predecessors, was greatly embarrassed for want of money. It was, therefore, determined to publish an address to the "members and friends of the Methodist societies," entreating them to raise, in such a manner as shall be deemed expedient by the various quarterly meetings, an amount averaging six-pence per member. The Conference was above £2,000 in debt; but this application to the societies was so successful that £2,661 18s. 2½d. was raised.

With the exception of one or two extraordinary collections for their assistance and relief, the Foreign Missions had been, till this period, sup-

ported by private subscriptions, gathered chiefly through the untiring activity of Dr. Coke, but it was now determined that a public collection throughout the entire Connexion should be made on their behalf.

Mr. Benson was requested to draw up a life of Mr. Fletcher, the vicar of Madeley; with which request he complied.

"Our Conference," says Mr. Pawson, "concluded in a very christian-like manner, with serious, fervent, solemn prayer; so that they who stayed till the conclusion of it were not only deeply affected, but parted one from another as christian ministers ought to do on such occasions, not knowing that they should meet again in the present world."

1802. On July 26th, the fifty-ninth Conference was begun at Bristol, Mr. Joseph Taylor was chosen president, and Dr. Coke, secretary.

Even since the year 1793, different societies had applied yearly to the Conference for the privilege of having the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper administered unto them by their own preachers. In 1794, it had been granted to ninety-three societies, and afterwards so many applications had been annually made, that in this year (1802) 218 societies enjoyed this spiritual privilege.

The Conference exhorted all the wives of the preachers to dress as becometh those who profess to walk with God; insisted upon the preachers themselves setting the societies a good example not only in dress, but in all things; recommended the people to stand while singing, and kneel

during prayer ; and directed that the wives and children of the preachers should, as often as possible, attend the preaching.

This Conference was distinguished for great harmony and peace. The liberality of the people in subscribing so largely during the past year for the relief of the financial embarrassment of the Conference, had impressed the minds of all the preachers with a deep sense of the kindness of the members and friends, and had filled their hearts with gratitude to Almighty God for His providential deliverance of them out of all their difficulties.

1803. On July 25th, the sixtieth Conference was begun in Manchester. Mr. Joseph Bradford, who was chosen president in 1795, was again chosen president, and Dr. Coke, the secretary.

Three young preachers.—Jabez Bunting, Robert Newton, and Daniel Isaac, were this year among others, admitted into full connexion.

In the "Minutes," we read that "Dr. Coke superintends the Missions." The superintendence of the Missions by Dr. Coke, is a fact noticed in every year's "Minutes" from 1799 till 1813, he having been during all that period annually re-appointed to that responsible position.

The Conference strongly condemned the conduct of certain individuals,—local preachers, who had obtained licenses for preaching, and had abused the privilege of such licenses by claiming exemption from civil and military offices. It was justly considered to be utterly at variance with the *spirit* of the Toleration Act, if not with its

express requirements, for persons who were not regularly and wholly devoted to the work of the ministry, to shield themselves from the performance of certain duties connected with serving in the Militia, &c. by a preaching licence.

The first Committee of Privileges was appointed by this Conference. It was to consist of ten persons. The Rev. Dr. Coke; the Rev. Joseph Benson; the superintendent of the London circuit for the time being; George Wolfe, Esq., Christopher Sundius, Esq.; Mr. Joseph Butterworth; Mr. Robert Middleton; Mr. Mr. Joseph Bulmer; the general steward of the London circuit for the time being; and Thomas Thompson, Esq., of Hull. This committee was appointed to guard the "religious privileges" of the Methodists in those "critical times;" and it was likewise to be consulted previous to the commencement of any law-suit wherein Methodist interests were involved.

This Conference drew up four addresses. Two of them to the Societies in England, one to the Irish Conference, and the other in answer to one which had been received from the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. In one of the addresses to the Connexion the people are exhorted to loyalty, and are informed of the kindness of Government respecting those persons who could not conscientiously learn military exercise upon the sabbath-day; and in the other the Conference complains of the practice of petitioning for preachers, and of the embarrassed state of the Connexional Funds.

1804. On July 30th, the sixty-first Conference commenced in London. Mr. Henry Moore, was chosen president, and Dr. Coke, secretary

The Foreign Missions had been carried on hitherto under the management of Dr. Coke, but now it was thought advisable to appoint a Committee for the purpose of attending to the finances, and giving advice ; Dr. Coke, nevertheless, being very properly re-appointed, as usual, the general superintendent of all the Missions.

This Conference determined that no Methodist preacher should be allowed to carry on a trade. " We judge," say they, " that such a pursuit of private emolument is incompatible with our ministerial duties."

It was likewise determined that as the practice of private persons or office-bearers petitioning for preachers had a direct tendency to impede the working of the system of itinerancy, and by degrees, to destroy it, the Conference would not regard any petition unless it came from a regular quarterly meeting.

1805. On July 29th, the sixty-second Conference was begun in Sheffield. Dr. Coke was elevated to the presidential chair, and Mr. Joseph Benson was appointed to the secretaryship.

Resolutions were passed respecting several subjects ; for the execution of Conferential business with greater despatch ; for preserving purity of doctrine in the younger preachers ; for the prevention of the interference of district meetings in the arrangement of the stations ; for the proper administration of the Lord's Supper ; and for the

discontinuance of the practice of singing pieces in chapels, &c. The Conference broke up, above £800 in debt.

Lord Nelson having beaten, in October, the combined fleets of France and Spain, off Cape Trafalgar, and Sir Richard Strachan having secured another victory a few days after, the English nation in the warmth of its gratitude for these glorious successes, started a "Patriotic Fund" for the relief of those widows and children whose husbands and fathers had fallen in those engagements. The Methodists collected for this benevolent object, the noble sum of £2000; the preachers exerting themselves to the utmost in raising the subscription.

1806. On July 28th, the sixty-third Conference was begun at Leeds. Mr. Adam Clarke was chosen president, and Dr. Coke, secretary.

When Mr. Kilham and his party separated themselves from the Methodist society, they took with them a number of the chapels. The connexion being at that time much shattered, suffered this gross injustice to quietly pass over; but at this Conference it was determined to recover some, and if possible, all of them. A chapel at Brighouse, in the Halifax circuit, was chosen, principally with a view to try the general question, and the committee of privileges was directed to commence a law-suit for its recovery.

A Mr. Joseph Cook was this year expelled from the ministry, for persisting in holding erroneous opinions upon some material points of doctrine. These doctrines were Justification and the Witness

of the Spirit. His brethren were very anxious to save him to the connexion, and the ministry, but he was stubborn, and they were therefore obliged to dismiss him. His friends built a chapel for him at Rochdale, but he did not occupy it long, for he finished his earthly course in a very few years. The chapel soon afterwards became the property of the Methodist connexion.

1807. On July 27th, the sixty-fourth Conference commenced in Liverpool. Mr. John Barber was chosen president, and Dr. Coke, secretary.

In order to show its interest in the object and success of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Conference directed that a collection should be made in all the principal congregations in Great Britain in support of that excellent institution. The collection was made, and the amount, £1298 16s. 0½d., transmitted through Mr. Adam Clarke to the treasurer of the society.

Various minutes were adopted respecting the reception of preachers; the impropriety of what are called camp meetings; the exclusion from society of barbers, who carried on their business upon the sabbath-day, &c. The Conference also determined that "no person shall, on any account, be permitted to retain any official situation in our societies who holds opinions contrary to the total depravity of human nature, the divinity and atonement of Christ, the influence and witness of the Spirit, and christian holiness, as believed by the Methodists."

1808. On July 25th, the sixty-fifth Confer-

ence was begun at Bristol. Mr. James Wood was chosen president, and Dr. Coke, secretary.

Sierra Leone, in Africa, first appeared this year upon the minutes of Conference. "A preacher," it is remarked, "is to be sent as soon as the general superintendent and committee can find a suitable person."

This Conference directed that the law-suit already commenced for the recovery of Brighthouse Chapel, should be continued under the direction of a committee; strongly condemned the practice of sitting during public singing and prayer; declined to give its sanction to the erection of an organ in any of our chapels; and passed various prudential regulations.

1809. On July 31st, the sixty-sixth Conference was commenced in Manchester. Mr. Thomas Taylor was chosen president, and Mr. Joseph Benson, secretary.

The state of the finances had now become as Jonathan Crowther says, "truly alarming," for it was found that in the Contingent Fund alone, there was a deficiency of £3,019 1s. 6d. The Conference took measures for the reduction of this "alarming" debt; and adopted a number of valuable minutes respecting the affairs of the society.

An edition of Mr. Wesley's Works, in octavo, was commenced this year, and finished in 1813, in sixteen volumes.

The number of members now stood as follows:—

	Members.
In Great Britain	132,086
In Ireland	25,835
Total in Great Britain and Ireland ...	<u>157,921</u>

The Methodists in America, like their fathers and brethren in England, were actively engaged in spreading "pure and undefiled" religion among their fellow men. And their efforts had been crowned with abundant success. Mr. Lee, in his history of the American Methodists, remarks, "It is now (1809) just forty years since the first Methodist preachers were sent to America by Mr. Wesley; they came over in 1769. In the United States there are 324 circuits, 589 preachers, and 163,048 members."

"During the same period of forty years, more than 3,000 local preachers were raised up amongst us. In the same year, (1809) Bishop Asbury collected the names of those local preachers that were then living, and in connection with the Methodists; their numbers were 1640."

CHAPTER XIV.—*From the year 1810 till 1820.*

1810. On March 5th, the case of Brighthouse Chapel, near Halifax, was finally settled. The Kilhamites were obliged to restore it to its rightful owners ; and several other chapels which had been taken away under similar circumstances, were afterwards restored to the Old Connexion, in virtue of the decision of the Master of the Rolls in this particular case.

On July 30th, the sixty-eighth Conference was begun in London. Mr. Joseph Benson was chosen president, and Dr. Coke, secretary.

Some of the brethren had very serious apprehensions that attempts would shortly be made by some eminent political men to restrict the privileges which were enjoyed by the Methodists and others, under the protection of the Act of Toleration. These apprehensions, as we shall see, were not without just foundation.

In this year's "Minutes," after the names and characters of the preachers who had died are given, the following significant remark is made,—"*** It is much to be desired that all our friends would take care to have the beds, in which they put the preachers, perfectly dry."

This Conference condemned quacks and impostors ; determined that preachers, should not be formally admitted into "full connexion" at district meetings, but only at the Conference ;

required the chairmen of the districts to report very minutely concerning the health, piety, moral character, abilities, &c., of all candidates, for the ministry ; and enjoined superintendents to reform certain irregularities in the administration of discipline.

An account of the receipts and disbursements of the three collections and contributions, namely, Kingswood collection, yearly subscription, and the preachers fund contribution, was now published, both separately, and in the minutes, by order of the Conference.

1811. In May, Lord Sidmouth brought his celebrated Bill on Toleration into the House of Lords. The obnoxious character, and ruinous tendency of its provisions, aroused the attention of the Methodists and Dissenters, and hundreds of petitions against it were immediately poured into the Upper House of Parliament. Several noble lords earnestly and eloquently opposed the Bill, which, however, was read a second time on May 11th. Lord Erskine then moved that the Bill be read that day six months, which motion, after various apologies had been made by the advocates of the Bill, was carried without a division. Some attempts were afterwards made to put a new construction upon the Toleration Act, which, if allowed, would have been wholly destructive of the Methodist itinerancy. All these attempted persecutions were, however, happily defeated ; and even led to results the very opposite of those which their originators intended ; for application was in consequence made to Parliament, and a

fresh law was obtained, which rendered any future apprehensions unnecessary, by rendering persecution impossible.

On July 29th, the sixty-eighth Conference began in Sheffield. Mr. Charles Atmore was president, and Dr. Coke, secretary.

The importance and necessity of "family religion" was enforced upon the attention of the societies; the preachers also were directed to promote it by various means; superintendents were recommended to form committees to co-operate with the general committee in London, in disseminating religious tracts throughout the land; and the superintendents were likewise directed to attend more particularly to several points of discipline which had not been properly executed.

This Conference, feeling the necessity which existed for another Connexional school for preachers' sons besides that of Kingswood, directed the president to immediately purchase the "house and estate at Woodhouse Grove, near Leeds, in Yorkshire," as being the most eligible that had been offered for the purpose. In honour of their venerable Founder, the Conference directed these premises when purchased, to be designated "The Wesleyan Academy at Woodhouse Grove." The preachers at once subscribed above £400 towards the expenses of the purchase, and an address was drawn up and circulated throughout the societies, enforcing the claims of this Institution upon the attention of the people, and soliciting financial assistance.

1812. On July 27th, the sixty-ninth Conference was opened at Leeds. Mr. Joseph Entwisle was president, and Dr. Coke, secretary.

Joseph Butterworth, Esq., and Mr. Allan attended, and gave an account of the various steps which they had taken (as agents of the Connexion) in procuring from Parliament the new Toleration Act, whereby "our religious liberties are confirmed and secured." The Conference gave them their "most hearty and unanimous thanks" for their laborious exertions in this truly important and righteous cause.

Directions were given concerning the administration of baptism; band-meetings were to be revived and extended; public bands were to be established, and love-feasts held wherever it was practicable; measures were taken for the relief of the financial difficulties of the Connexion; and the annual examination of preachers at district meetings was directed to be personal, distinct and searching.

The Connexion was, at this time, above £100,000 in debt for chapels.

1813. On July 28th, the seventieth Conference was commenced in Liverpool. Mr. Walter Griffith was chosen president, and Dr. Coke, secretary.

The state of the finances was found to be really alarming, the Conference being about £5,000 in debt. To remove this burthen was the anxious desire of the preachers. As one means to this end, an address was drawn up to the trustees, soliciting their assistance. An address to the

stewards was also drawn up, wherein the Conference made various suggestions to prevent the recurrence of their present embarrassment.

It was asked, "What is the judgment of the Conference concerning the proposal of a Methodist Mission to the east? Answer. "The Conference authorizes and appoints Dr. Coke to undertake a mission to Ceylon and Java; and allows him to take with him, six preachers for that purpose, exclusively of one for the Cape of Good Hope."

On December 31st, Dr. Coke sailed for the Cape of Good Hope, and the Island of Ceylon, taking with him half-a-dozen chosen men as missionaries. The Doctor was indefatigable in his labours for the spread of the gospel in the distant parts of the earth.

1814. On May 3rd, Dr. Coke, who was sailing from Bombay to Ceylon,—was found dead in his cabin. It is believed that apoplexy was the cause of his death. After the usual funeral solemnities, his body was committed to the great deep, until the sea shall give up her dead. He was a man of great kindness of disposition; and his exertions in the cause of Christian Missions, were unparalleled.

On July 25th, the seventy-first Conference began in Bristol. Dr. Adam Clarke was chosen president, and Mr. Jabez Bunting, secretary.

Previous to this year, the hundred preachers who formed the legal Conference, and those only, voted at the election of president and secretary. But it was now agreed that all who had travelled

fourteen years should likewise vote. Previous to this year also, the vacancies caused in the legal hundred by death, &c., had been filled up according to seniority. But now it was agreed that one in every four of such vacancies should be filled up by the vote of the Conference without regard to seniority. Mr. Bunting was the first who was enrolled among the legal hundred by *vote*; and it was in consequence of this new regulation, and his participation in its benefits, that he became eligible to be elected secretary to the Conference.

In order to raise the necessary pecuniary supplies for the support of our Missions, the Conference strongly recommended the immediate establishment of Methodist Missionary Societies in all the districts in the kingdom, where it had not been already done. Providence having called away the laborious Dr. Coke, who had been the chief director and supporter of the Missions, it had become imperatively necessary for the Connexion to arouse from its lethargy, and carry on the great work with spirit and perseverance. Enthusiastic meetings were held in different parts of the country, and Missionary Societies were formed. But that beautiful, well-arranged, and compact organization, according to which all our Missionary societies throughout the kingdom are now modelled, originated with Mr. Morley and Mr. Bunting.

It was resolved to present a dutiful Address to His Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, in the name, and on the behalf of the Conference, assuring him of their loyalty to the Constitution,

and attachment to the Throne ; expressing, also, their gratitude for their own religious privileges, and the restoration of peace to the nations of Europe ; and earnestly entreating his Royal Highness to use his utmost endeavours in securing the total abolition of the iniquitous slave trade.

1815. On July 31st, the seventy-second Conference commenced in Manchester. Mr. John Barber was chosen president. He had filled that office eight years before. Mr. Jabez Bunting was chosen secretary.

The Conference gave some orders respecting congregational singing and public worship ; some additional directions were given in order to promote the mental improvement of the preachers ; some regulations were made concerning the Preachers' Auxiliary Fund ; Home Missions, it was decided, should be merged in the regular circuits ; directions were given respecting the making Congregational and private collections ; and it was likewise directed that certain steps should be taken to prevent any increase of the general debt of the Connexion.

1816. On July 29th, the seventy-third Conference was begun in London. Mr. Richard Reece was appointed president, and Mr. Bunting, Secretary.

Directions were given concerning Missionary affairs in general ; and additional regulations respecting the Kingswood and Woodhouse-Grove Schools, were made. Some orders were given about Book-room affairs, and the Book-committee

were authorized to undertake a new monthly publication to be called "The Youth's Instructor and Guardian."

The Conference in the "Miscellaneous Orders and Resolutions" inserted in the Minutes," say they "approve of the conduct of their Book-committee in London, in having refused to facilitate the circulation of a book on Ecclesiastical Claims, which was printed in Scotland, and published by a member of our Connexion; and deem it a public duty to declare, in the fear of God, their most decided disapprobation of various passages contained in that book, as well as of the general spirit and style of it, which the Conference believe to be unbecoming, and unchristian."

On October 16th, Thomas Taylor, an old Methodist Preacher, possessing considerable talents, died at Birch-house, near Bolton, the residence of his friend, Roger Holland, Esq., in the 79th year of his age. Mr. James Montgomery, the able and accomplished Sheffield poet, honoured him by writing some verses to his memory, entitled "The Christian Soldier's Death."

1817. On July 27th, the seventy-fourth Conference was begun at Sheffield. Mr. John Gaulter was president, and Mr. Jabez Bunting Secretary.

Some directions were given with regard to Chapel debts, and a chapel committee appointed to prevent the imprudent erection of chapels. The "warmest thanks" of the Conference were given to Mr. Richard Watson for his "able and triumphant Defence of the Wesleyan Methodist

Missions in the West Indies,'” published during the year. Further directions were given respecting our Missionary affairs in general, and an outline of a “Plan of a General Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society” was approved. Some regulations were made for the purpose of permanently improving the general finances of the Connexion, and judicious advice and recommendations given concerning Sunday Schools.

1818. On July 27th, the seventy-fifth Conference was commenced at Leeds. Mr. Jonathan Edmondson was president, and Mr. Bunting, as usual, was the secretary.

The Conference had to record the death of Edward Hare, a man of respectable intellectual capabilities, and possessing large controversial powers, who died in the 43rd year of his age, and in the 20th of his ministry: and of George Story, who was received in 1762, and, in addition to his ministerial labours, had been for many years very useful to the Connexion as superintendent of the Connexional printing-office.

A “General Chapel Fund” for the relief of chapels burthened with debt, was directed to be immediately instituted; and some resolutions were passed, concerning the state of the Connexional finances in general.

The Conference returned its “cordial and unanimous thanks to Mr. Benson for the service which he had rendered to the body,” by the publication of his excellent Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, and expressed its “high satis-

faction with the solid learning, the soundness of theological opinion, and the edifying attention to experimental and practical religion which are displayed in his valuable work."

The "Plan of a General Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society," mentioned last year, having been considered by a committee, and largely extended, it was now adopted by the Conference, and the whole "Plan," with all its details, was inserted in the "Minutes."

1819. On July 26th, the seventy-sixth Conference began in Bristol. Mr. Jonathan Crowther was appointed president. and Mr. Bunting again appointed secretary.

Regulations were made concerning the allowance to Preachers' Children, and "The Childrens' Fund" instituted. Measures were taken to ensure a continuance of freedom from debt as far as the "General Fund of the Connexion,"—that is, the Contingent Fund, was concerned. Several resolutions were passed respecting the "General Chapel Fund," which had been established the previous year.

The number of preachers and members now stood as follows :—

	Members.
In Great Britain	196,605
In Ireland	22,580
On the Missions, &c.	25,150

Total number of members under the care
of the British and Irish Conferences } 244,335

	Preachers.
In Great Britain	707
In Ireland	128
On the Missions, &c.	113
<hr/>	
Total number of preachers in connexion with the British & Irish Conferences ...	948

CHAPTER XV — *From the year 1820 till 1830.*

1820. On July 26th, the seventy-seventh Conference commenced at Liverpool. The Rev. Jabez Bunting, who had been employed as the sub-secretary of the Conference, from the year 1806 till the year 1814, and since that time had been annually appointed as the principal secretary, was now elevated to the presidential chair. Mr. George Marsden was chosen secretary,

Resolutions were passed concerning the Chapel Fund, Children's Fund, Contingent Fund, Schools and Missions. Organs were to be allowed to be erected in chapels, on obtaining the special consent of the Conference.

It was asked, "What measures can we adopt for the increase of spiritual religion among our societies and congregations, and for the extension of the work of God in our native country?" "After long and deeply serious deliberation on this important question, we have unanimously agreed to

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the following results." Here follow many directions, drawn up under 31 heads, and they were ordered to be read and seriously considered at the next regular annual District Meeting. This order was afterwards extended to every annual District Meeting. These "Liverpool Resolutions" as they are commonly called, were drawn up by the president, and are distinguished by the spirit of humility, piety, and wisdom which pervades them. They would have done credit to the heart and head of John Wesley himself; and, indeed, they are little more than an extension of certain rules which that venerable man drew up for the regulation of the conduct of that portion of his preachers whom he designated *helpers*. The regular and prayerful reading of these admirable resolutions, in District Meetings and elsewhere, has probably done as much towards preserving and increasing the piety, devotion, and usefulness of the Wesleyan ministry, as anything else whatever.

Mr. Robert Southey, the Poet-Laureate, having injudiciously left his proper vocation, and employed his pen in writing a life of Mr. Wesley, wherein he had most injuriously misrepresented our venerable founder, and had, in the spirit of a flippant philosophy, attacked, both covertly and openly, some of the distinguishing peculiarities of doctrine, not only of Methodism, but of Christianity; the Conference, wishing to provide an antidote to these misrepresentations and errors, requested the Rev. Richard Watson to prepare a review of his book.

The Conference also requested Dr. Adam Clarke to write a life of Mr. Wesley, suited to the present times and circumstances; and Mr. Moore was desired to assist him with his communications and advice.

1821. On February 16th, the Rev. Joseph Benson died, aged 74 years. He was a most powerful preacher, and a thoroughly sound divine. His acquaintance with every branch of theology, was accurate and comprehensive. As a Theologian, he was probably unequalled, certainly unsurpassed by any man in England. The Rev. Jabez Bunting preached his funeral sermon in City Road Chapel, and afterwards published a well-written memoir of him in the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine.

On July 26th, the seventy-eighth Conference was opened at Manchester. Mr. George Marsden was president, and Mr. Robert Newton, secretary.

The Conference passed some resolutions concerning the spiritual state and prospects of our societies in general; and directed that the Twelve Rules of a helper, and the results of the conversation on carrying on the work of God, inserted in "Minutes" of the previous year, should be annually read, and seriously considered at every District Meeting.

The preachers were peremptorily required to read the Pastoral Addresses of the Conference to the societies in their respective circuits.

1822. On July 31st, the seventy-ninth Conference began at London. Dr. Adam Clarke was

president, and the Rev. Robert Newton, secretary.

The Conference of 1820, as we have before remarked, had requested Dr. Clarke to write a life of Mr. Wesley, and he had accordingly turned his attention to the subject. Some "hinderances" however, were, as he says, "unexpectedly found to exist," which prevented him from proceeding with the work; and instead of writing a life of our Founder, he resolved to collect materials respecting the different members of the Wesley family. This interesting work was consequently compiled, and the MS. was generously given to the Book-Room. For this "generous present" of the "Memoirs of the Wesley family" to the Connexion, the Conference gave Dr. Clarke its "cordial thanks."

The Rev. Jabez Bunting, the editor, was thanked by the Conference for "the very able manner in which he had conducted the Magazine during the past year," and for the "general improvements which had been effected in its execution and appearance."

It was resolved to promote as much as possible among the ministers and people, a more general and earnest prayerfulness, for the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Church of Christ, and on the world.

This Conference appointed a General Tract Committee, in order to carry into more extensive operation the circulation of religious tracts.

1823. In the early part of this year, the Rev. Richard Watson published the "first part" of his

"Theological Institutes ; or, a view of the Evidences, Doctrines, Morals, and Institutions of Christianity." The last part of this elaborate work was published in July, 1829, and the whole was inscribed to Jabez Bunting, A.M., "as a small expression of respect for his talents and virtues, and of the value placed upon his friendship by the author."

The esteem and affection which these two great men felt for each other was unbounded, and remained unabated, till death removed one from the scene of earthly friendships.

On July 30th, the eightieth Conference commenced at Sheffield. Mr. Henry Moore was president, and Mr. Robert Newton secretary.

The Rev. Richard Reece was appointed representative to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States of America ; and Mr. John Hannah was appointed to accompany him. The Conference earnestly recommended them, and their mission, to the prayers of the societies and congregations.

The practice of Sunday baking was condemned ; and the usage, which had become prevalent in some parts of the country, of teaching the art of writing in Sunday Schools was denounced as an unjustifiable infringement of the sanctity of the Sabbath.

1824. On February 20th, Thomas Blanshard, who had been the book-steward, died "in great peace."

In the spring of this year was published "A Catechism of the Evidences of Christianity and

the Truth of the Holy Scriptures." This is commonly called the *third* Catechism, and though intended for the youth of the Wesleyan Connexion, it is calculated to instruct even some grey-headed ministers. Mr. Watson had previously written the *first* and *second* Catechisms, and all were published under the sanction of the Conference.

On July 28th, the eighty-first Conference was opened at Leeds, Mr. Robert Newton was president, and Mr. Jabez Bunting, secretary.

The affectionate thanks of the Conference were given to the Rev. Jabez Bunting, the late editor, and they resolved to record in their printed "Minutes," "their high approval of the ability, discretion, and christian spirit, which he had constantly evidenced in that very important department of the business of the Connexion."

The "cordial thanks" of the Conference were given to the Rev. Henry Moore for his "generous present" to our Book-room, of his "Life of Wesley," and he was requested forthwith to complete for publication the second volume of that work. The "Life" by Dr. Coke, and Mr. Moore, published soon after Mr. Wesley's death, was compiled in haste, and is consequently meagre and incomplete, but this by Mr. Moore alone is full and accurate, and abounds with interesting anecdotes, quotations, and observations.

The Rev. Richard Reece and the Rev. John Hannah, having returned from America, presented themselves before the Conference, and gave the assembled brethren much interesting information respecting the American Societies.

They received the unanimous and "cordial thanks" of the Conference for their "faithful and judicious discharge of the duties connected with their Deputation," and for the intelligence which they had communicated.

It was resolved to celebrate the Centenary of Mr. Wesley's entrance into the work of the christian ministry, by devoting the 19th of September, 1825, to solemn religious services; and it was further resolved to solicit subscriptions from the friends throughout the Connexion, and make public collections upon the day appointed, for the purpose of erecting some building which might serve as a monument to the memory of our great Founder;—and that a Mission House, and other Connexional premises, would be such a suitable monument.

The Conference gave it as its solemn judgment, that it was very highly inexpedient and dangerous for a Methodist preacher to marry any person who was not a member of our society.

1825. The Rev. Arthur G. Jewitt, who collected the "Minutes of Conference" for the years 1819 to 1824 inclusive, and published them in one volume, forming the fifth of the octavo editions of the "Minutes," inserts an Address at the end of it, dated "Reading, May 20th, 1825," and signed "A. G. J." wherein he says;—"The present volume includes matters of great importance in the affairs of Methodism. During the six years of which the Minutes are now collected together, some very valuable improvements have taken place in our plans of Finance;—as,

for instance, in the regulations for the distribution of the annual grants from the Contingent Fund, the provision made by the Children's Fund; and the relief afforded by the Chapel Fund. The business of the Missions has also increased, and in some other departments of our work new measures have been called for and adopted. On spiritual matters some most excellent resolutions have been passed by the Conference, and these have been followed by the circulation of the Annual Pastoral Addresses to the Societies, in which the same advices are echoed, and the same spirit breathed. During this period also, intercourse has been opened with the Conferences of the United States of America, and the *messengers of the churches* have greeted each other on both sides of the Atlantic."

On July 27th, the eighty-second Conference was begun at Bristol, Mr. Joseph Entwisle was chosen president, and Mr. Jabez Bunting, secretary.

The Conference presented their "cordial thanks" to the Rev. Thomas Jackson, for his "able and esteemed services," as editor during the past year; and the Rev. Jabez Bunting, and Rev. Richard Watson were likewise *cordially thanked* for the assistance they had afforded in "several important departments" connected with the Connexional editorship.

To "promote the prosperity and permanency of the work of God in our Societies," the preachers were earnestly exhorted to attend to several points of discipline, which attention, it

was considered, was calculated to secure that desirable end.

It was agreed that the president should have a junior preacher as his assistant, because of the "great accumulation of public business" which devolved upon him.

1826. On July 26th, the eighty-third Conference commenced at Liverpool. The Rev. Richard Watson was president, and the Rev. Jabez Bunting, secretary.

The Conference recorded the "recent and lamented death of Joseph Butterworth, Esq., late general treasurer of the Wesleyan Missionary Society;" and expressed its deep sense of the zeal, attention, and liberality, with which he had fulfilled the duties of that office, as well as of the distinguished excellencies of his general character.

Many resolutions and appointments were made, as usual, under the heads of "Missions; Schools; Book Affairs; Chapel Fund; Chapel Building Committee; Childrens' Fund; Contingent Fund; Preachers' Auxiliary Fund; various branches of Discipline; Methodist Sunday Schools; and Miscellaneous Resolutions."

1827. On July 25th, the eighty-fourth Conference commenced in Manchester. Mr. John Stephens was president, and Mr. Jabez Bunting, secretary.

Several regulations were adopted respecting the appointment, stay, and return, of foreign missionaries.

Additional securities were provided in reference to the character, qualifications, and scriptural

orthodoxy. of persons proposed as candidates for the ministry. With regard to the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of our Lord in particular, the Conference declared, that it was the "acknowledged right," and under existing circumstances, the "indispensable duty" of every chairman of a District, to ask all candidates, whether they believed the doctrine; and that it was the "right" and the "duty," also, of every president to examine very particularly all persons admitted into full Connexion, and require an explicit and unreserved declaration of their assent to it, as a truth revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

Further arrangements were made to facilitate the business of the Conference; certain regulations were agreed to concerning the division of Circuits; and directions were given to promote the spiritual welfare of the young people connected with all our Societies and congregations."

The Conference adopted the *report* of a committee it had appointed, which report contained "General Principles and Rules to be observed in the management of Methodist Sunday Schools; and resolved that all our Sunday Schools should be constructed and conducted according to that plan.

A depository was ordered to be forthwith established in a suitable part of the premises connected with the book room in London, for the purpose of safely preserving important and valuable manuscripts and books respecting Wesleyan Methodism.

1828. On July 30th, the eighty-fifth Confer-

ence was begun in London. Mr. Jabez Bunting was president, and Mr. Robert Newton, secretary.

During the past year some dissatisfied persons in Leeds had created a great disturbance in the society, professedly because the Conference had given certain trustees permission to erect an organ in the new chapel in that town. Such was the violence of this agitation, that a special District meeting was rendered necessary. One was accordingly held, and the leading agitators were very properly expelled from the Society. Great excitement prevailed throughout the Connexion; and as movements of this kind are always progressive in their character, the dispute about an organ was quickly succeeded by a dispute about Methodist discipline. Many persons not only in Leeds, but London, and other places, hotly contended for alterations in our system; contending in particular, for the finality of the decisions of local courts. But this would have been Independency, not Connexionalism. Those who wanted the former might have had it peaceably; and have left those persons who preferred the latter to peaceably enjoy it. To agitate and to desolate was, however, more congenial to their feelings, than to quietly retire from the church they professed to dislike. When we have to deal with such grossly inconsistent persons as these, there is only one reasonable way of proceeding, and that is to expel them.

Under the heading of "The Resolutions of the Conference on the late dissensions at Leeds," this Conference expresses its "most cordial thanks" to the preachers stationed at Leeds, "for their

christian, affectionate, judicious, and constitutional conduct, under the very difficult and extraordinary circumstances in which they were placed during the past year."

It also gives its "judgment," that the "special District meeting held at Leeds" was indispensably necessary, and, in that most extraordinary emergency, constitutional also, under the special rules of 1797; and that the measures adopted by that meeting were fully justified by the circumstances of the case; and the Conference presents its thanks to the brethren of the Leeds District; to the late president, the Rev. John Stevens; to the late secretary, the Rev. Jabez Bunting; and to other brethren, for the efficient assistance which they afforded on that occasion."

The Conference noticed also with feelings of indignation the insults directed against the Rev. Jabez Bunting, and expresses "the high and unabated sense it entertained of the excellency of his personal character, and of the integrity and disinterestedness with which he had devoted his energies to the efficient discharge of the duties pertaining to the arduous offices with which he had from time to time been invested;" and likewise expresses other sentiments of sympathy, respect, and gratitude.

The lay office-bearers of Leeds who had co-operated with the preachers in supporting the rules and usages of the Connexion, also received the thanks of the Conference; and other resolutions were adopted respecting this reckless movement, and its deluded victims.

But the agitation continued after the Conference had broken up. Some of the London radicals drew up certain "Resolutions," and were unscrupulous and indefatigable in their endeavours to procure signatures. The Rev. Richard Watson now entered the field, and, in the spirit of just rebuke and pity, wrote "An Affectionate Address to those trustees, stewards, local preachers, and leaders of the London South Circuit whose names are affixed to certain Resolutions bearing date September 23rd, 1828." Two answers, so-called, were got up to this "Affectionate Address," but he never took any public notice of them.

The Rev. Daniel Isaac was at this time engaged with the Leeds dissentients. His "Letters" to the "Protestant Methodists," as they designated themselves, were triumphantly conclusive on the points at issue; and they must have been also galling in the extreme. The poor radicals at Leeds were as unable to grapple with Daniel Isaac on the teaching of Scripture, as their brethren of London were with Richard Watson on Methodist law.

1829. On July 29th, the eighty-sixth Conference was open at Sheffield. Mr. James Townley was chosen president, and Mr. Robert Newton, secretary.

The Conference in its review of circumstances connected with the interests of our Missions during the past year, says that, it "cannot but record with feelings of deep regret and affectionate remembrance, the death of Thomas Thomp

son, Esq., of Hull. who was for several years one of the general treasurers of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, and a liberal contributor to its funds."

"Cordial thanks" were given to the Rev. Richard Watson for his "kind and generous gift of the copy-right of his Theological Institutes to the Book-room."

This Conference delivered its judgment "in reference to the general discipline and government of the Connexion," unanimously resolving, and declaring its resolution, to "maintain and uphold the Articles of Pacification adopted in the year 1795, and the Regulations which are arranged under various heads in the Address of the Conference, dated Leeds, August 7th, 1797, with the "Miscellaneous Regulations" which follow them, as hitherto acted upon in the general practice of the body, and explained and confirmed by the decisions of the Conference recorded in its Minutes of last year on the dissentients at Leeds, rules which, taken together, equally secure the privileges of our people, and the due exercise of the pastoral duties of ministers; and which the Conference regards as forming the only basis of our fellowship as a distinct religious society, and the only ground on which our communion with each other can be continued."

The number of preachers and members now stood as follows :

	Preachers.
In Great Britain	842
In Ireland... ..	142
On Foreign Stations.....	175
<hr/>	
Total in connexion with the British and Irish Conferences.....	1159
	Members.
In Great Britain	247,529
In Ireland	22,846
In our Foreign Stations	39,660
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Total under the care of the British and Irish Conferences	810,035

CHAPTER XVI.—*From the year 1830 till 1840.*

1830. On July 28th, the eighty-seventh Conference began in Leeds. Mr. George Morley was president, and Mr. Robert Newton, secretary.

The Conference strongly portrayed and denounced the evils of slavery, and recommended certain measures to secure, if possible, "its entire abolition throughout the colonies of the British Empire."

"Renewed and increased diligence in pastoral visitation" was resolved upon as a means to further promote the spiritual prosperity of the

people; and an address was presented to the King, (William the IV.) on his accession to the throne, which his Majesty was pleased to receive in the most gracious manner.

The Rev. Richard Watson was desired by the Conference to compile a life of Mr. Wesley, for general use.

Towards the latter end of this year, "A Supplement" was added to the Wesleyan Methodist Hymn Book. With this addition, there are 770 hymns in the collection. Of these, it appears that

621 were composed by the Rev Charles Wesley.

5 by the Rev. John Wesley.

24 translations from the German	} also by the Rev. John Wesley
1 translation from the French	
1 translation from the Spanish	

4 were composed by the Rev. Thomas Olivers.

2 by the Rev. Benjamin Rhodes.

1 by the Rev. W. M. Bunting.

111 by Dr. Watts, and other hymn writers.

770 Total.

This Hymn Book is of itself, a complete and invaluable body of divinity, and for the beauty of its poetry, the accuracy and propriety of its language, and the soundness of its theology, it is far superior to any other collection of hymns in existence.

1831. On June 1st Mr. Watson's "Life of Wesley" was published. It is written in an easy, flowing, style, and forms an admirable exposition and defence of Mr. Wesley's conduct. The Book-

Committee soon afterwards requested Mr. Watson to write a Biblical Dictionary, and, having been previously engaged in collecting materials for such a work, he readily complied.

On July 27th, the eight-eighth conference was commenced in Bristol. Mr. George Marsden was president, and Mr. Robert Newton, secretary.

The cordial thanks of the Conference were given to the Rev. Richard Watson for the very able and satisfactory manner in which he had fulfilled the request of the last Conference in compiling a concise life of Mr. Wesley, adapted to general circulation, and for his generous gift of the copyright to the Book-room; and he was requested to enlarge that work, so that it might become the standard and authorized life of our venerated founder.

The Conference again denounced the slave-trade, calling it "one of the foulest of our national sins," and earnestly recommended all our members and friends who were, or might be possessed of the elective franchise, to support such candidates only, as should "decidedly pledge themselves in favour of a speedy and effectual legislative enactment for the extinction of this most unchristian system."

1832. On July 25th, the eighty-ninth Conference was opened at Liverpool. Mr. Robert Newton was president, and Mr. Edmund Grindrod, secretary.

The cordial thanks of the Conference were "affectionately tendered" to the Rev. Richard Watson, for his "eminently liberal and disinterested conduct" in having presented to the Connexion the copyright of several of his "highly valuable

and important works," viz:—his "Theological Institutes," "Life of Mr. Wesley," "Biblical Dictionary," and "Observations on Southey's life of Mr. Wesley."

Several resolutions passed by the Chapel Fund Committee for the purpose of securing speedy relief for embarrassed trusts, were unanimously adopted.

A secession having taken place at Derby during the preceding year, mainly owing to the erroneous views of the seceders on the subject of Faith, under the heading of "The Derby Case," the question is asked, "What is the judgment of the Conference respecting the division which has taken place in our society at Derby?" Answer. "That, under all the painful circumstances of the case at Derby, it appears to the Conference that the division which has taken place there, could not have been avoided by brother Davis and his colleagues, without such a sacrifice of our established doctrine and discipline, as it would have been criminal in them to make; and that they are justly entitled to, and do still fully retain, the undiminished affection and confidence of the Conference."

Colonial slavery was again denounced, and further recommendations were given to promote and secure the "early and entire abolition of slavery in the British dominions."

When this Conference assembled, or was about to assemble at Liverpool, the Cholera was prevailing in the town to an alarming extent, and fears were entertained concerning the safety of the

preachers. A day was set aside however, during the previous week, for special prayer, and many meetings were held for the purpose of supplicating God on behalf of His servants. The fervent prayers of these righteous men availed much; the fearful disease quickly abated, and the preachers, and the families by whom they were received and entertained as servants of Christ, were all most mercifully preserved.

But immediately after the Conference had dissolved, an "unexampled scene of mortality" says Mr. Jackson, "was opened among them." Dr. Adam Clarke was the first victim. He died suddenly of Cholera Morbus, at Bayswater, near London, on August 26th. The Rev. Thomas Stanley fell next. He expired in the streets of London, on October 9th. Then followed the Rev. John James, one of the missionary secretaries, who also died in London on November 6th.

1833. The Rev. Richard Watson was likewise called away to his heavenly home, soon after the new year had commenced. To quote the Conference obituary, "This bright luminary of the church, and of his circle, set in death, to rise in eternal glory, January 8th, 1833. He died in the 52nd year of his age." "One of the most painful bereavements which any christian church ever suffered, our Connexion has sustained in the loss of this distinguished man, and eminent servant of Jesus Christ."

This great minister was born on February 22nd, 1781, at Barton-upon-Humber, in Lincolnshire. He entered the Wesleyan ministry in 1796, but

retired in the year 1801, and afterwards joined the "New Methodists." He, however, re-entered our ministry in 1812. His mortal remains were deposited in the burial-ground behind City Road Chapel, and his much beloved friend, the Rev. Jabez Bunting, preached his funeral sermon. The eminently beautiful and faithful character of him, inserted in the Conference Obituary was drawn up by the Rev. John Scott.

On July 31st, the ninetieth Conference assembled at Manchester. Mr. Richard Treffry was president, and Mr. Edmund Grindrod, secretary.

The Conference resolved that tablets should be erected in the City Road chapel, London, in memory of the late Rev. Messrs. Joseph Benson, Dr. Adam Clarke, and Richard Watson, similar to those which had been already erected in that place to the memory of the Rev. Messrs. Wesley, Fletcher, and Dr. Coke: and the book committee were directed to carry this resolution into effect.

With regard to a proposed union with the Methodist church of Canada, the Conference gave its judgment that "the cause of religion, generally, and the interests of Methodism in particular, would be promoted by the *united* exertions of the two Connexions:" and that an union upon certain reasonable grounds, was "highly important and desirable." To carry the resolutions of Conference into effect, the Rev. George Marsden was appointed its representative to Canada.

The Rev. Jabez Bunting having been during the past year most malignantly aspersed and

slandered, he again received the fraternal sympathy of his brethren.

With regard to the attacks which had been lately made on the London Missionary Society, the Conference resolved: "That a respectful and affectionate letter be sent to the secretaries of the London Missionary Society, disclaiming on the part of the Conference, any connexion whatever with the 'Christian Advocate' newspaper, and strongly disapproving of the attacks on their missions, which had been made in that paper."

The formation of week-day schools in connexion with our societies, was recommended: and a committee of ministers was appointed to meet together and arrange a plan for the better education of the junior preachers.

1834. On March 21st, the Rev. Daniel Isaac died. He was a man of uncompromising integrity and fearless intrepidity. No inducement could draw him from what he believed to be the path of duty, and he feared the face of no man. As a writer, he was unmercifully sarcastic, but in private life he is said to have been kind and affectionate.

On July 30th, the ninety-first Conference began in London. Mr. Joseph Taylor was chosen president, and Mr. Robert Newton, secretary.

The Rev. Thomas Jackson received, as usual, the "cordial thanks" of the Conference for the superior manner in which he fulfilled the duties of the office as editor; also for "his very valuable and acceptable 'Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Richard Watson,' compiled at

the request of the Book-committee : and for his kind and disinterested presentation of the copyright of that work to the Conference for the benefit of the Connexion."

The committee appointed last year to arrange a plan for the improvement of the young preachers, recommended that an Institution should be speedily formed for the promotion of that object, to be denominated " The Wesleyan Theological Institution for the improvement of the junior preachers," and the Conference, after considering the report, approved of the " Principles and general outline of the Plan" which the committee had recommended ; and resolved that a Theological Institution should be formed, the Rev. Jabez Bunting being appointed president of the Institution.

The Rev. Joseph R. Stephens, who had been suspended by a Manchester District meeting, because of his obstinate refusal to resign the office of secretary to the Church-Separation Society, and to abstain from taking any part in the proceedings of that or any other society or meeting, having a kindred object ; was required by the Conference to give a pledge that he would "strictly refrain from all future proceedings similar in character and spirit to those which had been so justly offensive in the past year, and devote himself to his proper work and calling." On giving this reasonable pledge to his brethren, all past occurrences were to be overlooked, and restored to his place in the ministerial body. If he refused, it was resolved that his suspension

should be continued another year ; and that, if he still remained unchanged in his determination, he should be dismissed.

Mr. Stephens required time for consideration ; and having expressed a desire that a committee might be appointed to converse with him privately, his desire was granted. On the next day, however, he announced to the Conference that he could not give the required pledge, and he, therefore, resigned his place as a Wesleyan minister.

1835. The "Watchman" newspaper was started at the commencement of this year. It was announced thus : "On Wednesday, January 7th, 1835, will be commenced a new weekly London family newspaper, to be called "The Watchman" Price sevenpence." It has always been distinguished for the high religious tone of its articles, and for ability it would not suffer comparison with any other newspaper emanating from the religious press. It is almost needless to remark that it has done important services to the cause of Wesleyan Methodism.

A special District meeting held at Manchester, having considered it necessary to suspend Dr. Warren from the ministry, because of his factious conduct in reference to the Theological Institution, he adopted a novel mode of annoyance in the history of Methodism, by appealing to the Court of Chancery against his suspension. The case was heard by the Vice Chancellor on February 28th, March 2nd, and March 3rd, of this year. But his application entirely failed. He and his friends, however, being greatly dissatisfied, the

case was re-argued before the Lord Chancellor on March 18th, and the three following days. But again he suffered defeat:—the judgment of the Vice Chancellor being confirmed. The case was argued with great ability on both sides, and the extent of the knowledge of Methodist laws displayed by the Vice Chancellor and Lord Chancellor is truly remarkable, which shows that they must have carefully and extensively read on the subject before giving their judgment.

Great were the agitations which, at this time, disturbed the Wesleyan Connexion. Dr. Warren's unaccountable proceedings created much excitement, but Methodist reform was also an object of great attention. The preachers were denounced as tyrants, and the laws as tyrannical. A regular system of agitation was recklessly carried on against Methodism and Methodist ministers; and a grand central Association was organized to give permanency and power to the efforts of the agitators.

On July 29th, the ninety-second Conference met at Sheffield. Mr. Richard Reece was appointed president, and Mr. Robert Newton, secretary.

It was asked, as usual, "What preachers have desisted from travelling?" Answer. "Joseph Forsyth, Samuel Warren, LL.D., John Averill, and Robert Emmett, who, after a full examination of their several cases, were unanimously excluded from our body, according to the usual forms of discipline exercised by us on such occasions."

Dr. Warren, who, as we have seen, was sus-

pended by a Manchester District meeting, and had afterwards unsuccessfully appealed to the Court of Chancery, against his suspension, now appeared in Conference to appeal against the decision of the District meeting. He had by his notoriously inconsistent, un-Methodistical, and unchristian conduct, utterly forfeited all right to be heard before the Conference, but it was agreed that he should be heard, not of "right or justice," but solely by way of "indulgence."

"In conformity with the preceding decision," we are told "the Conference then entered on the careful consideration of Dr. Warren's appeal, and of the transactions on both sides, from the commencement of the proceedings of the District committee, up to the present period." The minutes of the Manchester District meeting were read; Dr. Warren was heard at great length in his own defence; and Mr. Bromley was likewise heard on his behalf.

After the whole matter had been thoroughly examined and discussed, the Conference delivered an elaborate judgment upon the case.

The decision of the District committee, suspending the ministerial functions of Dr. Warren until he should submit to take his trial, was approved and confirmed; and the Conference considering it had been fully proved, that he had acted most dishonestly, un-Methodistically, and unchristian, in slandering his ministerial brethren, and attempting to overturn the discipline of the Connexion; and as he had moreover plainly avowed his determination to persist

in his factious and unrighteous practices: on these and similar grounds, the Conference unanimously judged and resolved that it could not with christian propriety and fidelity, allow Dr. Warren to continue a preacher in our Connexion. He was accordingly expelled.

In answer to the question, "What is the judgment of the Conference on the late suits in Chancery?" the Conference expressed its abhorrence of the principle that a minister may appeal from his own Church Courts, to those of the Civil Law; but nevertheless acknowledged the hand of God in the recent decisions of Chancery. It gave its cordial and respectful thanks to the Counsel engaged in the defence, and requested their acceptance of copies of Mr. Wesley's works, and of Mr. Watson's Life of Mr. Wesley. It recorded its "sincere and grateful acknowledgments" for the talented services of the lawyers employed, and presented each of them with a copy of Mr. Wesley's works. The Conference also unanimously thanked the trustees who had come forward so nobly and readily to defend the interests of Wesleyan Methodism; and passed resolutions in favour of the Rev. Joseph Taylor, the Rev. Robert Newton, and the Rev. Jabez Bunting.

Under the various headings of "Declarations from various circuits;" "Declaratory resolutions on several subjects;" "On the explanation and improvement of certain rules;" "Resolutions of Conference suggested by the present circumstances of the connexion;" "Plan of pacification

and Regulations of 1797;" the Conference expresses its deliberate judgment upon the various subjects concerned.

In the "Minutes" there are also inserted, "The Answer of the Conference to an address received August 1st, 1835," from a certain Delegate meeting; The declaration of some lay-members of the Methodist societies; and a "General Declaration of Methodist preachers."

"The special address of the Conference to the Wesleyan Methodist societies in Great Britain," contains its resolutions respecting, I. Financial Affairs. II. The expulsion of members. III. Meetings for communication with the Conference by memorial, on subjects of local concern, or on the general laws of the Connexion, and IV. Proposed revision and classification of our rules in general.

The Conference, though resolved to maintain inviolate the leading principles of the Connexion, was nevertheless anxious that the people should fully enjoy all the religious privileges which Scripture would authorize, or reason justify. Thus, the new regulations made at this time, while calculated to uphold the authority of the ministry, were also calculated to benefit the people. The prerogatives and duties of the one, and the privileges of the other, were perhaps never more clearly explained, and harmoniously blended, than by this important and celebrated Conference. Let no man denounce the laws of 1835, until he knows what those laws are. Let him read with candour the numerous documents and resolutions inserted in the "Minutes" for this year, and then

he will be more qualified to give an opinion concerning them. But for men who have never read and weighed these judicious, elaborate, and truly christian documents and decisions, to rail against them as being extremely base and tyrannical in their character, is certainly a most extraordinary exhibition of gross inconsistency and contemptible folly.

1836. On June 4th, the Rev. David McNicoll, a man of fine intellectual powers, departed this life, in the 55th year of his age.

On July 27th, the ninety-third Conference commenced in Birmingham. The Rev. Jabez Bunting was president, and the Rev. Robert Newton, secretary.

The Rev. Thomas Jackson having finished his six years term as the Connexional editor, was re-appointed to that office. The Rev. George Cubitt was appointed assistant editor.

The cordial thanks of the Conference were presented to the Rev. John Hannah for his very able and useful pamphlet entitled "A Letter to a Junior Methodist Preacher concerning the general course and prosecution of his studies in Christian Theology," and it recommended the pamphlet to the diligent and careful attention of the junior preachers, and to the candidates for the Methodist ministry in general.

A cheap and convenient edition of Mr. Wesley's "Christian Library" was considered desirable, and a recommendation was given to publish it, for the especial use of students (in the Institution) and ministers.

The Conference expresses the "great pleasure" with which it had received the intelligence that some highly respectable gentlemen had determined to establish a Wesleyan Proprietary School at Sheffield ; and gave its consent for any supernumary preacher, who might be willing and qualified, to become house governor and chaplain to the proposed seminary.

It was determined that all the preachers who should in this and all subsequent years, be admitted into full Connexion, should be ordained and set aside for their holy calling by the imposition of hands.

The Conference was happy to find that the documents which were drawn up the previous year, and published to the Societies, had given general satisfaction ; and it expressed its great obligations to Dr. Bunting for the excellent manner in which he had drawn them up.

It was thought necessary to again enforce the existing regulations respecting society meetings and prayer meetings : to record an expression of disapproval of the injurious extent to which the practice of inviting preachers from other circuits to preach special sermons, had been recently carried ; and to give a few explanations with regard to last year's legislation.

1837. On July 26th the ninety-fourth Conference was opened at Leeds. Mr. Edmund Grindrod was president, and Mr. Robert Newton, secretary.

The Conference made some regulations concerning the support of the children of worn-out

or deceased ministers ; condemned the practice of preachers issuing general circulars to any office-bearers of our society, or to Wesleyan Methodists distinctively, upon political subjects ; directed that the next quarterly fast day should be set apart particularly as a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, for a revival of the work of God ; and appointed a committee to meet during the next Conference in order to make preparations and arrangements for holding a Centenary Meeting in commemoration of the first formation of the Methodist United Society in year 1739.

On Aug. 11th, the Rev. Joshua Marsden died, in the 60th year of his age, and the 38th of his ministry.

1838. On January 20th, the Rev. Richard Treffry, Jun., a young man of fine talents, died, aged 33 years.

On July 25th, the ninety-fifth Conference was begun in Bristol. The Rev. Thomas Jackson being the president, and the Rev. Robert Newton the secretary.

The Conference earnestly recommended the commencement of town and city missions ; adopted the report of the Centenary committee, wherein was laid down the particular way and manner in which the Centenary was to be celebrated ; and requested the Rev. Thomas Jackson to prepare and publish a brief but comprehensive work on the subject, of the Centenary, embracing a history of the origin, progress, and present state of Wesleyan Methodism.

1839. On May 14th, Gideon Ouseley died.

"This great and devoted servant of Jesus Christ" on that day "fell asleep," as we are told, "in the full triumph of faith and hope, in the 78th year of his age."

On July 31st, the ninety-sixth Conference began at Liverpool. The Rev. Theophilus Lessey, president, and the Rev. Robert Newton, secretary.

The very cordial and unanimous thanks of the Conference were presented to the Rev. Thomas Jackson, for the prompt, able, and highly satisfactory manner in which he had fulfilled the wishes of his brethren by the preparation of the Centenary Volume.

Friday, October 25th, was appointed for the purpose of holding religious services in celebration of the Centenary, and Monday October 28th, was fixed upon for religious festivals.

The celebration of the Centenary of Wesleyan Methodism, was primarily and chiefly intended to promote the spiritual welfare of the people; but it was also intended to raise by collections and contributions a large amount of money to be applied to Connexional purposes. The money thus raised was gathered together and designated "The Centenary Fund." So popular was this movement, that above £200,000 was received, which was expended upon various objects of Methodistic interest and importance. The Theological Institution, the Wesleyan Centenary Buildings, the Wesleyan Missionary Society, Distressed Chapels, Worn-out Preachers and their Widows, the Centenary Monumental Chapel in Dublin, and Wesleyan Education, all had a share of this extraordinary

fund. The Wesleyan Methodists are generous, especially when they have any great objects before them to call forth their generosity. The amount of the Centenary Fund will be, to coming generations, the most striking monument of the liberality and devotedness of a happy, contented, and affectionate people.

A new Auxiliary Fund for Supernumerary Preachers and Preachers' widows was established this year. Before this period the members of society paid nothing to any fund for the specific purpose of giving regular support to worn out ministers and widows.

The number of preachers and members now stood as follows;

	Preachers.
In Great Britain	1058
In Ireland	157
On Foreign Stations	336
<hr/>	
Total in connexion with the British and Irish Conferences,	1545
<hr/>	

	Members.
In Great Britain	807,068
In Ireland	26,388
On Foreign Stations	72,727
<hr/>	
Total under the care of the British and Irish Conferences,	406,178
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CHAPTER XVII. *From the year 1840 till 1850*

1840. On July 29th, the ninety-seventh Conference was opened at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The Rev. Robert Newton was president, and the Rev. John Hannah, secretary.

The Conference records its devout gratitude to Almighty God for the success of the Centenary Fund during the past year; expresses its grateful acknowledgments to the Subscribers; and gives certain recommendations concerning the closing of the Fund.

It was decided that the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper should always be administered according to the Liturgy of the Church of England, or according to Mr. Wesley's abridgment.

The thanks of the Conference were given to Dr. Newton, for so kindly and promptly undertaking a journey to America, as representative to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. It eulogizes his conduct during his stay there, and thanks God for the gracious care and protection exercised over him.

Some differences having arisen between the Wesleyan Conference and the Upper Canada Conference, a special committee had been appointed the preceding year to "decide finally in all matters relating to the union." A large

committee was again appointed to consider the case. The Conference finally decided that the union was "impracticable."

1841. On June 10th, the Rev. Theophilus Lessey died in the 55th year of his age, and the 33rd of his ministry.

On July 28th, the ninety-eighth Conference was begun in Manchester. The Rev. James Dixon, president, and the Rev. John Hannah, secretary.

Thanks were given to the Rev. Thomas Jackson for his fidelity, ability, and diligence as the Connexional Editor, and for the publication of his valuable and interesting life of the Rev. Charles Wesley.

The result of the application made to the members of society in the month of January last, for donations in the classes, with a view to the extension of the Auxiliary Fund, which were expected to amount, in each circuit, to the average sum of at least sixpence per member, was the sum of £7154 11s. 4d., (£924 17s. 8d. short of 6d. per member,) for which the Conference expresses its thanks to Almighty God, and its grateful acknowledgments to the members of society. And further, it says that it "regards this contribution as completing the evidence that the plan for making a more regular and adequate provision for our supernumerary ministers, and for the widows of our deceased ministers, adopted in the Centenary year, has the cordial approval of our whole connexion."

The Conference expressed its devout acknow-

ledgments to God for the success of the Centenary Fund, and thanked the subscribers; gave its opinion concerning the present law of marriage; condemned the "Wesleyan Takings;" earnestly recommended quarterly meetings not to invite preachers to circuits before the March quarter day; gave its final decisions respecting the affairs of Upper Canada, confirming the dissolution of the union; and, as usual, passed several miscellaneous resolutions.

The "Minute" in condemnation of the "Takings" is as follows:—"What is the judgment of the Conference on the subject of a book entitled 'Wesleyan Takings,' to which its serious attention has been officially called?" Answer. "The Conference hereby expresses its pain and grief that such a book should ever have been published. It strongly disapproves of the general spirit and tendency of the book itself, as calculated to injure the spiritual interests of our people, and to diminish the proper influence and beneficial effects of the christian ministry, as an ordinance of God. And, with regard especially to the preface of what professes to be the third edition of that work, the Conference has good reason to believe that such preface contains passages which are, in the highest degree, unworthy of any person sustaining the christian or ministerial character, and which are, in various instances, most calumnious and unjust."

It is commonly believed that the Rev. James Everett, a minister who had an extraordinary predilection for anything sarcastic and personal,

was the writer of most, if not all of these "Takings." Whoever wrote them, it is certain that he was not burthened with much solid piety. A spirit of devotion and love was not his most striking characteristic. The preface to the third edition, which the Conference particularly notices and condemns, was, beyond doubt, written by an harlequin in black cloth. There is a considerable quantity of spite and resentment shown in it, but it is, at best, a contemptible piece of pitiful sophistry.

On November 6th, the Rev. Joseph Entwistle died.

1842. On Sunday May 1st. the Rev. Edmund Grindrod, compiler of the "Compendium of the laws and regulations of Wesleyan Methodism," died in the 57th year of his age, and the 36th of his ministry.

On July 7th the Rev. Jonathan Edmondson, M.A., a man whose writings it is impossible to abridge, died in the 76th year of his age.

On July 27th the ninety-ninth Conference began in London. The Rev. John Hannah was president, and the Rev. Robert Newton secretary.

The Conference passed resolutions containing expressions of gratitude to Almighty God, and of thankfulness to the subscribers &c. for the continued success of the Centenary Fund which was now very nearly brought to a close.

A day was appointed to be observed as a day of special fasting and humiliation, because of the depressed state of the country and of our societies; and the Conference gave "a renewed expression,"

of its sentiments concerning the peculiar and inviolable sanctity of the Sabbath day.

The necessity of an union with the Upper Canada Conference having been urged upon the attention of the British Conference, it again pronounced its judgment upon "Canadian affairs," saying it was "fully convinced" that the re-establishment of *such* an union as formerly subsisted between itself and the Upper Canada Conference, was neither practicable, nor desirable.

The Chairmen of Districts were directed to visit, at least twice a year, those circuits in their districts where only one minister was stationed.

1843. On July 26th the one-hundredth Conference commenced in Sheffield. The Rev. John Scott was chosen President, and the Rev. Robert Newton, secretary.

The Centenary Fund having been "brought to a termination eminently satisfactory," the Conference again records its "most devout thanksgivings to Almighty God," and "gladly renew its grateful acknowledgments" to the subscribers. It also gives its "cordial and respectful thanks" to the members and officers of the local committees in various parts of the Connexion, especially to James Wood, Esq., the General Treasurer, and to the General Committee and its secretaries, for their "able, diligent, and faithful services" in relation to this Fund.

On September 10th, the Rev. George Morley, who was born at Calverton, a village in Nottinghamshire, on February 17th, 1772, ended his earthly and happy career.

1844. On April 27th the Rev. Henry Moore, "the friend and biographer of the venerable Wesley" died, in the 93rd year of his age, and the 65th of his ministry.

On July 31st, the one hundred and first Conference began in Birmingham. The Rev. Jabez Bunting was appointed president, and the Rev. Robert Newton secretary.

The Conference resolved that, as the claims of the cause of Wesleyan Education were of great urgency and importance, the designation of the "General Chapel Fund" should be changed into that of the "United Chapel and Wesleyan Education Fund," and half of the amount received for this Fund, by subscriptions and collections should (for the next seven years at least) be paid over to the treasurers of the Wesleyan Education Committee.

A resolution was passed to prevent the imprudent erection of organs; chairmen of districts were authorized to visit any circuit in their districts, in any case of special difficulty, for the purpose of preserving peace and order, and securing the faithful administration of connexional law; the giving out of entire verses of hymns in public worship, was condemned as an inconvenient and injurious innovation; the sinful laxity manifested in reference to the observance of the Sabbath day, especially in connexion with Sunday travelling by railways was deplored, but a hope was expressed that the means used for its repression would be crowned with success; and the injurious and

unnecessary practice of working late hours in business, was noticed and censured.

1845. On July 30th the one hundred and second Conference was opened at Leeds. The Rev. Jacob Stanley president, and the Rev. Robert Newton secretary.

Another minute was adopted to prevent the imprudent erection of Chapel organs ; and one also concerning the sale of Chapels. The Conference strongly denounced the National Grant to the Romish College of Maynooth. And it gave permission for the solemnization of matrimony in our own Chapels, by our own ministers.

On November 19th the Rev. Joseph Taylor, for some time one of the secretaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, died in the 67th year of his age.

1846. On July 29th the one hundred and third Conference commenced in Bristol. The Rev. William Atherton president, and the Rev. Robert Newton, secretary.

The Conference enforces upon the attention of the people the necessity of keeping holy the Sabbath day ; expresses its great satisfaction and thankfulness, on hearing of the proposed formation of an Evangelical Alliance ; desires to reduce the number of preachers who annually attend the Conference ; adopts measures to secure more Pastoral Visitation ; and records its sentiments upon the retirement of the Rev. Richard Reece and others, from the regular work of the ministry.

1847. On July 28th, the one hundred and fourth Conference commenced in Liverpool. The

Rev. Samuel Jackson was president, and the Rev. Robert Newton, secretary.

The Conference urges upon the trustees of embarrassed chapels, the adoption of plans for their relief; again inserts the minute for the prevention of the imprudent erection of organs, and one respecting the sale of chapels; recommends the commencement of Catechumen classes in the different circuits; again expresses its sentiments on the religious observance of the Sabbath; and again notices the subject of Pastoral Visitation; gives directions concerning Home Missions, that the missionary character of our home-work may be better sustained, and be more extensively useful; mentions the irregularities which had taken place in certain circuits, and while guarding from censure genuine revivals of religion, strongly condemns the conduct of some persons who had taken occasion from late proceedings to propagate disunion, strife, and disorder.

The Rev. Dr. Alder, who had been over to Canada, was heard concerning the important results of his mission, and in particular, as to the re-union of the Conference of Upper Canada with the British Conference, now happily effected; and it was resolved unanimously, that "The Conference has received with great satisfaction the important and gratifying information which Dr. Alder has now given; and desires to express its thankfulness to God for the restoration of Dr. Alder's health, and for his safe return from his important mission."

The spiritual state of the work of God in the

Connexion at home, was surveyed by the Conference, and some recommendations were given, to promote its improvement.

The following "minute" was also passed :—
"*N.B. Anonymous Slanders.* Certain anonymous papers, bearing no name either of the authors or printers, having been circulated in our Connexion during the last year, which contain many serious imputations on the integrity and disinterestedness of several of our senior ministers, and other official members of the Conference, we feel it our duty to express our solemn conviction that the spirit in which such publications originate, is entirely at variance with the law of Christ; and that the brethren thus wickedly and slanderously attacked, deserve our sympathy and unabated confidence. And with reference to the Rev. Dr. Bunting, and the Rev. Dr. Newton, in particular, the Conference gladly takes this opportunity of re-asserting those sentiments of affectionate respect which it has already more than once expressed in its published resolutions, particularly in the Minutes of 1833 and 1835." The "Fly Sheets" however, continued to be published, notwithstanding this condemnation of them.

1848. On July 26th, the one hundred and fifth Conference was begun in Hull. Dr. Newton was the president, and the Rev. Joseph Fowler, the secretary.

Under the different headings of "Missions; Schools; Book Affairs; Chapel Affairs; Chapel Building Committee; Embarrassment of Chapel Trusts; Erection of Chapel-organs; Sale of

Chapels ; Children's Fund ; Contingent Fund ; Worn out Ministers' and Ministers' Widows' Auxiliary Fund ; Wesleyan Theological Institution ; Education ; United Committees of Privileges and Education ; Catechumen Classes, and Pastoral care of the Young ; Home Missions ; Attendance of Ministers at the Conference ; Spiritual State of the Connexion ; Miscellaneous Resolutions ; and Standing Orders," the Conference makes many necessary appointments , passes a great number of resolutions, and adopts an abundance of rules and regulations.

1849. There was at this period, much internal strife, ill feeling, and discord in the Methodist Society. A small, but persevering clique of dissatisfied ministers were exerting all their energies to damage, and, if possible, to destroy the fair reputation of some of their more honoured brethren in the ministry ; and great numbers of laymen either openly assisted them, or looked with gratification upon their exertions. There was much latent radicalism and disaffection in the societies, and it was obvious to every observer of the signs of the times, that the affairs of Methodism were approaching a most serious crisis.

On January 1st, the Rev. Samuel Dunn, one of the most inveterate and violent of the ministerial agitators, commenced the publication of a monthly periodical, entitled "The Wesley Banner, and Revival Record," wherein he thought proper to insert articles and statements calculated to seriously affect the peace and prosperity of the Methodist Society. A fresh weekly newspaper,

called the " Wesleyan Times," having for its object the degradation of the Wesleyan ministry, and the revolution of Wesleyan discipline, usages, and laws, was likewise at the same time started.

This notorious print far excelled all its *liberal* predecessors in the vulgarity of its language, and virulence of its falsehoods. In the year 1834, there was the "Christian Advocate," and since that period, we have seen the successive rise and fall of the " Wesleyan Record," the "Wesleyan Chronicle," and the " Wesleyan;" but none of these organs displayed such an utter contempt, not only of the requirements of christianity and of truth, but of the common civilities of life, as the " Wesleyan Times " has done.

Through the unceasing and unscrupulous exertions of this flagitious newspaper, and of the " Wesley Banner," and other publications, the Wesleyan Connexion was kept in a continual ferment, and all parties looked forward with intense anxiety for the assembling of the Wesleyan Conference.

On July 25th, the one hundred and sixth Conference commenced in Manchester. The Rev. Thomas Jackson was chosen president, and the Rev. John Hannah, secretary.

The Rev. James Everett, who was universally believed to be the chief writer of the " Fly Sheets," the "Anonymous Papers" condemned by the Conference of 1847, was officially required to inform his brethren whether he was the author of those clandestine and slanderous publications, but he sternly, and in " a tone and manner justly

considered offensive," refused to satisfy them upon the subject, and was consequently expelled from the Connexion.

The Rev. Samuel Dunn and the Rev. William Griffith, having resolved in opposition to the will of the Conference, not to discontinue the "Wesley Banner," and refusing to give their brethren a pledge to abstain from all divisive proceedings in the future, were likewise of necessity expelled.

The three expelled ministers, Messrs. Everett, Dunn, and Griffith, immediately after their expulsion, began to hold meetings in different parts of the country; and, before large and excited assemblies, composed of all parties, they delivered long and violent addresses upon the injustice and tyranny of the Wesleyan Conference. Then followed one of the most disgraceful agitations that ever disturbed the peace of a religious community. The *meek* and *lowly* trio of ministerial agitators employed every means within their power to disgrace the Wesleyan ministry, and injure Wesleyanism. No language was too vulgar, and no comparisons too degrading to accomplish this purpose. The Conference was represented as being excessively tyrannical and despotic, and Methodism "as it is," as being as bad, or worse than Popery. Numbers of laymen joined hand and heart with the expelled ministers, and a regular, systematic, and extensive crusade was perseveringly carried on against our ministry, our laws, our usages, our institutions, and everything belonging to the Wesleyan Connexion. And it must be confessed, that a large measure of success

crowned the exertions of these so-called Reformers,* for vast numbers of persons left our societies, and either sought other spiritual homes, or went back into the world. But Methodism still retains its vitality, vigour, and expansiveness, and shall retain them, notwithstanding all the efforts of its enemies to wither, to blast, and to destroy it; for it is the cause of God, and if he be for it, who can be effectively against it? "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall: the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob."

At the Conference of 1849, the number of preachers and members in the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion stood as follows:—

	Preachers.
In Great Britain, (including the regular ministers, preachers on trial, and those who are supernumary and superannuated)	1207
In Ireland	163
In our Foreign Stations	400
<hr/>	
Total number of preachers in connexion with the British & Irish Conferences...	1770
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***REVOLTERS** would be a more appropriate designation. "They are all grievous *revolters*, walking with slanders: they are brass and iron; they are all corrupters," Jeremiah vi. 28.

	Members.
In Great Britain	348,274
In Ireland	22,221
In our Foreign Stations	97,746

Total number of members under the care
of the British and Irish Conferences } 468,241

	Preachers.
Belonging to the Wesleyan Conference in Canada, in connexion with the British Con- ference	136

	Members.
Under the care of the Wesleyan Confer- ence in Canada, in connexion with the British Conference.....	24,268

CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

1850. On July 31st, the Conference assembled in London. John Beecham, D.D. was chosen president, and John Hannah, D.D., secretary.

The brethren had to record the death of the venerable Richard Reece, who with unwearied zeal, and unswerving fidelity, had laboured in the work of the ministry during the protracted period of sixty-three years. He was twice elected president of the Conference, and it is said, he nobly redeemed the pledge he uttered, "Methodism shall never deteriorate in my hands." He died

on April 27th, 1850, in the eighty-fifth year of his age.

"Cordial thanks" were presented to the Rev. Samuel Jackson, the Rev. Frederick J. Jobson, and a sub-committee, who in conjunction with them, had edited the "Wesleyan Vindicator" for the valuable services they had thereby rendered to the cause of constitutional Methodism.

"Cordial thanks" were likewise presented to the Rev. Thomas Jackson, for his pamphlet entitled "The Wesleyan Conference; its duties and responsibilities;" to Dr. Beecham, for the republication of his "Essay on the Constitution of Wesleyan Methodism;" to the Rev. John Scott, for his pamphlet entitled "Wesleyan Discipline;" to George Smith Esquire, for his "Wesleyan Ministers and their Slanderers;" and to Mr. Charles Welch, of Hull, for his pamphlet on "The Claims of Lay Delegation;" pamphlets containing a mass of argumentation in favour of Wesleyan Methodism and its ministers, which can never be answered.

The Conference, having carefully considered several "Memorials" respecting our Connexional economy which it had received, adopted some Declaratory Resolutions; wherein it states that it regarded itself as being bound by the principles set forth in the New Testament, and by the sacred trust transmitted to it by Mr. Wesley and his coadjutors, to maintain the *pastoral office* in unimpaired integrity; that it solemnly resolved to stand by the *Connexional principle* adopted by Mr. Wesley and hitherto maintained by his successors; and declared its

unalterable resolution to uphold the authority hitherto vested in its District Committees.

Respecting the "recent agitations" carried on under the pretext of obtaining a *reform* in Methodism, the Conference expressed its solemn condemnation of the principles and plans on which they had proceeded; its deep regret that so many persons, in various places, should have allowed themselves to be so far moved, as during the course of the agitations they appear to have been, from their steadfastness in charity as well as their loyalty to Methodism; and its determination on behalf of the Connexion generally, and especially on behalf of its peaceable and loyal members, to enforce the discipline of the Connexion on all such as, after due expostulation and warning, should unhappily persist in actively promoting or abetting the mischief and strife of which the Conference and the Connexion at large, had so much reason to complain.

1851. On July 30th, the Conference began in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Dr. Hannah was chosen president, and the Rev. John Farrar, secretary.

An unusual number of well known ministers had, during the preceding year, departed this life; Leonard Posnet, Jacob Stanley Senr., William Vevers, William Atherton, George Cubitt, Joseph Fowler, and William Pemberton, being some of the laborious and good men, whose loss the Conference had to deplore.

The Conference appointed a committee to carefully examine the suggestions for alterations in our discipline, contained in the memorials and other communications which had been received;

declared its unshaken conviction that the disciplinary proceedings of 1849 were absolutely necessary; affectionately called upon all those who had been misled and drawn away from us, to consider, calmly and religiously, the origin, character, and necessary tendency of the course which the agitators had adopted, and were still pursuing; and expressed its earnest hope that both ministers and people would abstain as much as possible, from everything that would divert their minds and efforts from the great spiritual objects for which Methodism was first brought into existence.

1852. On July 28th, the one hundred and ninth Conference began in Sheffield. The Rev. John Scott was president, and the Rev. John Farrar, secretary.

The Conference had the pleasure of noticing that the "United Testimonial Fund" which the gratitude and generosity of the Connexion had prompted it to raise, as an expression of high esteem for Dr. Bunting and Dr. Newton, was now completed, £7,885. 2s. 8d. having been subscribed. On account of increasing infirmities, Dr. Bunting last year withdrew from active service in the cause of Methodism; and this year the Conference had to record the retirement of Dr. Newton.

The committee appointed to examine the memorials received by the preceding Conference, having agreed to recommend certain disciplinary changes, the Conference in compliance, with their recommendation, enacted several regulations respecting quarterly meetings; their constitution and privileges; the sending of memorials to Conference; and various other matters; wherein that

venerable assembly showed its earnest desire for peace by the liberality of its concessions.

1853. On July 27th, the one hundred and tenth annual Conference began in Bradford. The Rev. John Lomas was president, and the Rev. John Farrar, secretary.

The Conference approved and adopted the report of the proceedings of the committee of finances which had met in pursuance of the directions given by the Conference of 1852. It was stated in the report, that the present state and probable wants of the Connexion required, that measures be forthwith adopted for the extinction, as early as possible, of the debts at present existing in the various departments of its general economy; and at the same time such arrangements be made in its several departments, as should constitute an adequate and reasonable ground of confidence that similar incumbrances should in future be prevented.

This Financial Committee having, for the extinction of those debts commenced a "Connexional Relief and Extension Fund;" the Conference devoutly rejoiced in its "formation, progress, and extraordinary success; and in order that the contemplated sum of £100,000 might be raised, directed that all the ministers of the Connexion should "zealously co-operate" with the committee in carrying out the noble scheme.

Various regulations were adopted to prevent an increase of our financial embarrassments. No preachers were for the present to be taken out on trial, and no chapels erected or enlarged unless free from debt.

It could not be expected that the recent agitations would pass away without leaving some disastrous effects upon us. We have had to mourn over much spiritual desolation,—the decay of much vital piety,—the decrease of much holy zeal, and the loss of a vast number of members. But Methodism shall arise in fresh vigour and power. She has nothing to fear. A bright and glorious future is before her. Her principles have been thoroughly tested; and as we understand them more, we love them better than ever. The attack upon her has been protracted and severe, but it has not prostrated, and has hardly weakened, her strength.

Being fully alive to the immense importance of educating the young in religion and virtue, she is making unprecedented exertions in that great cause; having already at vast trouble and expense erected and opened at Westminster one of the most complete educational establishments in Europe.

Her missionary operations are conducted with spirit and perseverance. France has become an independent, though affiliated, Methodist Connexion, and has a Conference of its own. Australia will soon be placed in the same position. The prospects of China are bright and cheering; and who can tell how soon even that secluded country may have a Methodist Conference sitting within it, devising plans for the promotion of truth and piety, and the extension and establishment of the work of God. Methodism is doubtless destined to act no insignificant part in the conversion of the world

A LIST

OF THE

WESLEYAN METHODIST CONFERENCES.

No. of Con.	Year.	Where held.	President.	Secretary.
1	1744	London	Rev. John Wesley	
2	1745	Bristol	"	
3	1746	Bristol	"	
4	1747	London	"	
5	1748	Bristol	"	
6	1749	London	"	
7	1750	Bristol	"	
8	1751	Bristol	"	
9	1752	Bristol	"	
10	1753	Leeds	"	
11	1754	London	"	
12	1755	Leeds	"	
13	1756	Bristol	"	
14	1757	London	"	
15	1758	Bristol	"	
16	1759	London	"	
17	1760	Bristol	"	
18	1761	London	"	
19	1762	Leeds	"	
20	1763	London	"	
21	1764	Bristol	"	
22	1765	Manchester	"	
23	1766	Leeds	"	
24	1767	London	"	
25	1768	Bristol	"	
26	1769	Leeds	"	
27	1770	London	"	
28	1771	Bristol	"	
29	1772	Leeds	"	
30	1773	London	"	
31	1774	Bristol	"	
32	1775	Leeds	"	

No. of Con.	Year.	Where held.	President.	Secretary.
33	1776	London	Rev. John Wesley	
34	1777	Bristol	"	
35	1778	Leeds	"	
36	1779	London	"	
37	1780	Bristol	"	
38	1781	Leeds	"	
39	1782	London	"	
40	1783	Bristol	"	
41	1784	Leeds	"	
42	1785	London	"	
43	1786	Bristol	"	
44	1787	Manchester	"	
45	1788	London	"	
46	1789	Leeds	"	
47	1790	Bristol	"	
48	1791	Manchester	William Thompson	Thomas Coke
49	1792	London	Alexander Mather	"
50	1793	Leeds	John Pawson	"
51	1794	Bristol	Thomas Hanby	"
52	1795	Manchester	Joseph Bradford	"
53	1796	London	Thomas Taylor	"
54	1797	Leeds	Thomas Coke	Samuel Bradburn
55	1798	Bristol	Joseph Benson	"
56	1799	Manchester	Samuel Bradburn	Thomas Coke
57	1800	London	James Wood	Samuel Bradburn
58	1801	Leeds	John Pawson	Thomas Coke
59	1802	Bristol	Joseph Taylor, sen.	"
60	1803	Manchester	Joseph Bradford	"
61	1804	London	Henry Moore	"
62	1805	Sheffield	Thomas Coke	Joseph Benson
63	1806	Leeds	Adam Clarke	Thomas Coke
64	1807	Liverpool	John Barber	"
65	1808	Bristol	James Wood	"
66	1809	Manchester	Thomas Taylor	Joseph Benson
67	1810	London	Joseph Benson	Thomas Coke
68	1811	Sheffield	Charles Atmore	"
69	1812	Leeds	Joseph Entwisle	"
70	1813	Liverpool	Walter Griffith	Jabez Bunting
71	1814	Bristol	Adam Clarke	"
72	1815	Manchester	John Barber	"

No. of Con.	Year.	Where held.	President.	Secretary.
73	1816	London	Richard Reece	Jabez Bunting
74	1817	Sheffield	John Gaulter	"
75	1818	Leeds	Jon. Edmondson	"
76	1819	Bristol	Jonathan Crowther	"
77	1820	Liverpool	Jabez Bunting	George Marsden
78	1821	Manchester	George Marsden	Robert Newton
79	1822	London	Adam Clarke	"
80	1823	Sheffield	Henry Moore	"
81	1824	Leeds	Robert Newton	Jabez Bunting
82	1825	Bristol	Joseph Entwistle	"
83	1826	Liverpool	Richard Watson	"
84	1827	Manchester	John Stevens	"
85	1828	London	Jabez Bunting	Robert Newton
86	1829	Sheffield	James Townley	"
87	1830	Leeds	George Morley	"
88	1831	Bristol	George Marsden	"
89	1832	Liverpool	Robert Newton	Edmund Grindrod
90	1833	Manchester	Richd. Treffry, sen.	"
91	1834	London	Joseph Taylor, 2nd.	Robert Newton
92	1835	Sheffield	Richard Reece	"
93	1836	Birmingham	Jabez Bunting	"
94	1837	Leeds	Edmund Grindrod	"
95	1838	Bristol	Thomas Jackson	"
96	1839	Liverpool	Theophilus Lessey	"
97	1840	Newcastle	Robert Newton	John Hannah
98	1841	Manchester	James Dixon	"
99	1842	London	John Hannah	Robert Newton
100	1843	Sheffield	John Scott	"
101	1844	Birmingham	Jabez Bunting	"
102	1845	Leeds	Jacob Stanley, sen.	"
103	1846	Bristol	William Atherton	"
104	1847	Liverpool	Samuel Jackson	"
105	1848	Hull	Robert Newton	Joseph Fowler
106	1849	Manchester	Thomas Jackson	John Hannah
107	1850	London	John Beecham	"
108	1851	Newcastle	John Hannah	John Farrar
109	1852	Sheffield	John Scott	"
110	1853	Bradford	John Lomas	"

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